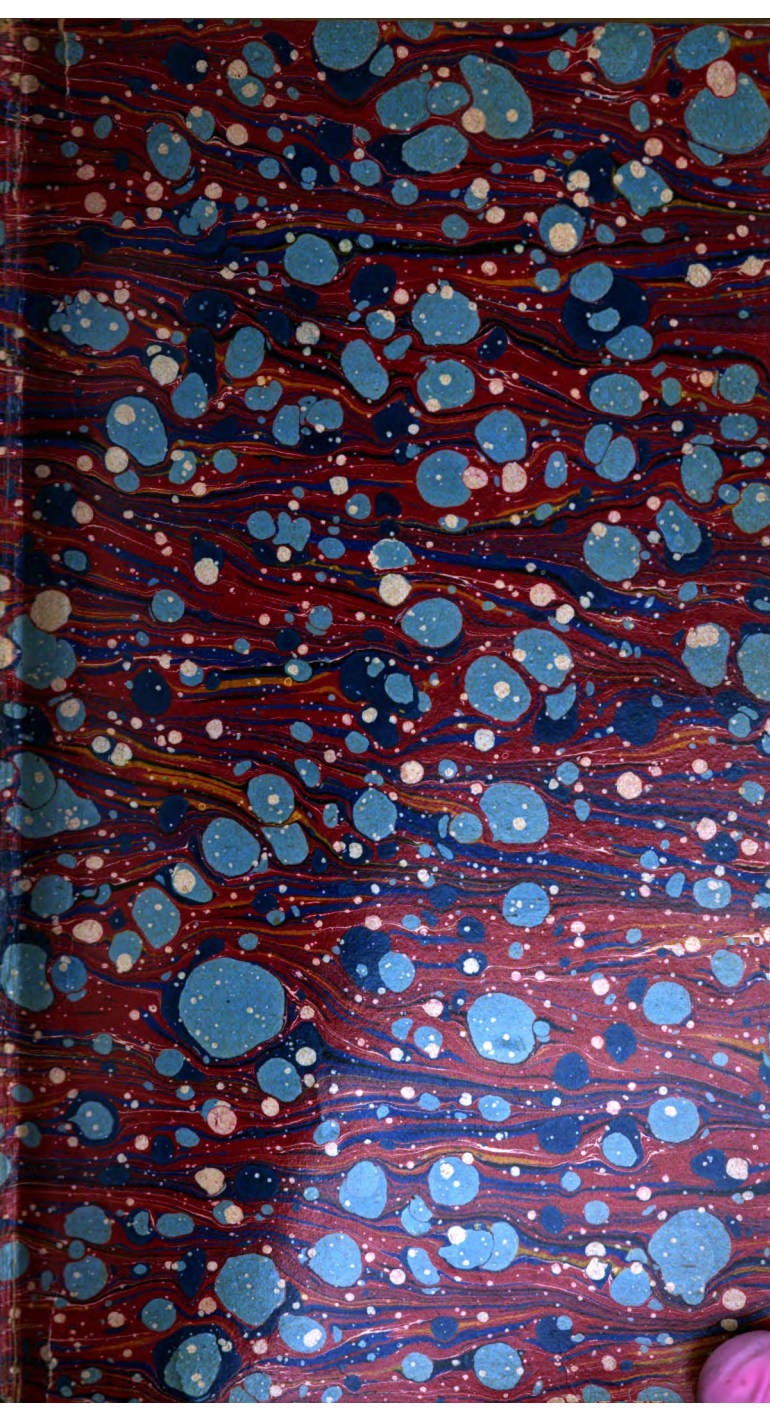
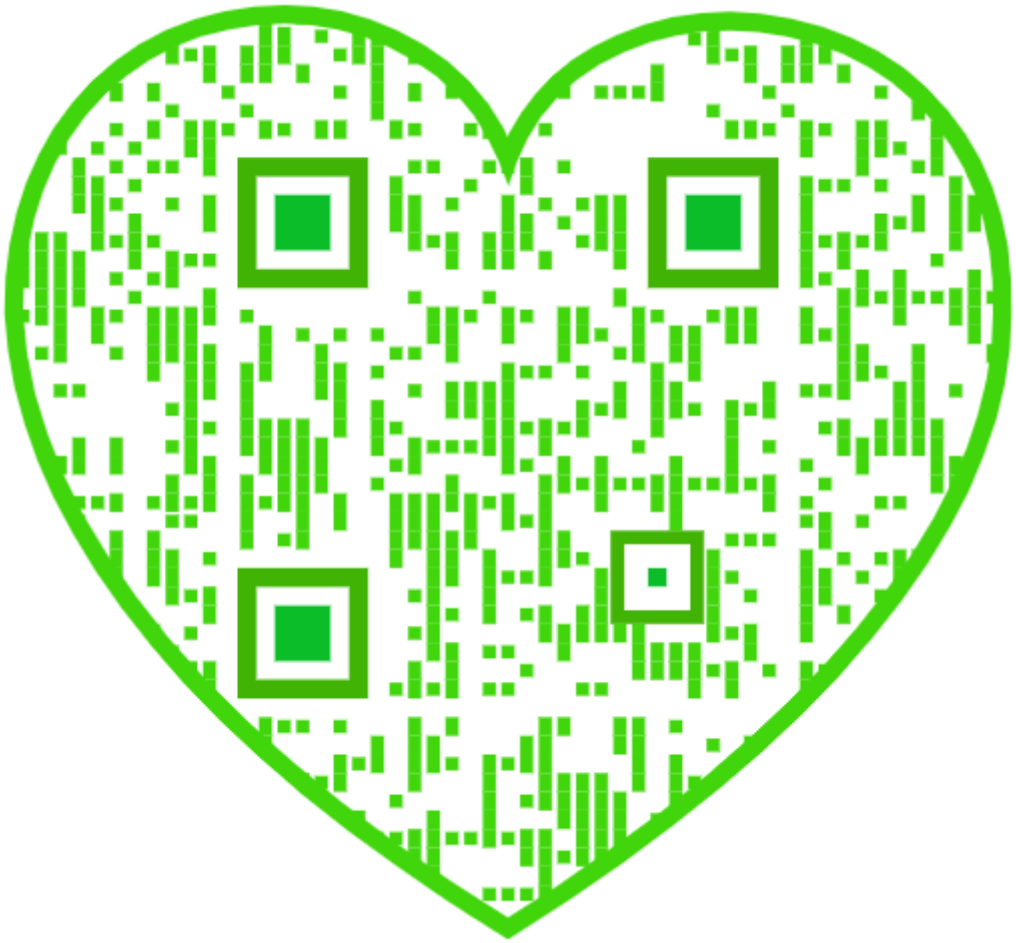




AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE

FIELD SPORTS OF FRANCE.

AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE

FIELD SPORTS OF FRANCE.

BEING A PRACTICAL VIEW

OF HUNTING, SHOOTING AND FISHING,

ON THE CONTINENT.

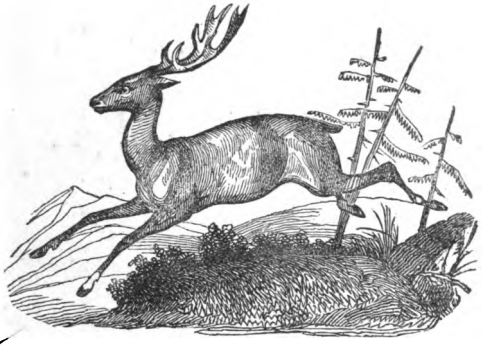
WITH A CONCISE NOTICE OF THE HABITS AND INSTINCTS OF THE SEVERAL ANIMALS IN QUESTION, AND A SUFFICIENT SKETCH OF THE GAME AND PISCATORY LAWS OF FRANCE, FOR THE GUIDANCE OF SPORTSMEN.

BY

Roderic

R. O'CONNOR, ESQ^re^,

BARRISTER AT LAW.



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THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE INSCRIBED

TO

JOHN ROGERS, Esq^re^,

OF CONINGSBY, IN THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN,

BY HIS FRIEND

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

If "the british sportsman" were received in France as he is in Bavaria, where M^r^ Parisel, the inspector at Bruckenau waits upon all visiters, to consult their tastes and pleasures, and tenders permission to shoot and fish in the extensive royal demesnes in its vicinity,* a guide to the field sports of France would be unnecessary; but on the contrary, it is with the utmost difficulty, and after much time has been wasted in making fruitless enquiries, that he can obtain any useful local information.

The french sportsmen are not very communicative on these topics; and the rest of the community seem to know very little about the matter.

* D^r^ *Granville's Spas of Germany*, p. 406.

The plan and arrangement of this little work will be found extremely simple, and calculated, it is presumed, to place the subject before the reader, in a clear and satisfactory manner.

It is divided into three parts : the 1st part treats of hunting ; the 2d part, of shooting ; and the 3d part of fishing.

Sufficient information is given to enable the british sportsman to form a correct view of the manner in which his *confrères* on the continent hunt, shoot and fish ; and also to guide him to those localities where each sport may be enjoyed in its greatest perfection

To this is added a succinct notice of the natural history, habits and instincts of the several animals in question, collected from the best and most authentic sources; together with a sketch of the game and piscatory laws of France.

St-Omer, May 1846.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

FIELD SPORTS OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE PASSPORT AND PERMIS DE CHASSE.

Those who visit the continent, whether they come to participate in the gaieties of Paris, or to ramble in search of amusement through the rural districts of France, must be provided with passports, and they should obtain them, before they leave London, at the office of the french ambassador, nº 6, Poland street, Oxford street, where they are gratuitously delivered. Those which are granted in the provincial towns of France answer sufficiently well, for a mere sporting

excursion; but the authorities of neighbouring countries always refuse to countersign them: they expire in a year, cost two francs, and occasion some delay and inconvenience in procuring them.

I once lost considerable time by one of those treacherous annuals, the expiration of which had accidentally escaped my observation. On my arrival at the gates of Lille it was seized by a species of undertaker who, very gravely, transmitted it to the *bureau des passe-port, en ville*, for interment. The *employés* of that very *triste* office were then engaged in the celebration of the funeral fete of the lamented duke of Orleans, and the remains of my defunct guardian were detained, pending the performance of that solemn rite. When all was over, an officer, in the gaudy uniform of the *garde nationale* of that ancient town, teeming with military honours of every tint in the rainbow, came to my relief, and, being a *wee bit* too elevated to bestow a thought upon such undignified minutiæ, most politely handed me my passport, and released me from a very anxious and painful state of suspense, as I feared that I should have had to retrace my steps, and to have travelled back under the *surveillance* of the police.

If your object be shooting, your first step must be

to procure a *permis de chasse* or *port d'armes*, which is analogous to our shooting license. It is obtained by an application at the office of the mayor, in whatever town you may chance to be. The mayor cannot grant a *permis de chasse*, but he will forward your application for one to the *prefet* of the *département*, who will immediately grant and transmit it to the *bureau des contributions directes*, in such town, where it will be delivered to you, on payment of twenty five francs.

Formerly the *permis de chasse*, was grantable only to certain privileged classes : but these unfair, humiliating and vexatious distinctions no longer exist. The *chasseur roturier* is now as much at liberty to shoot partridges (if he can), as his aristocratic neighbour, provided *he forks out the blunt* to the above mentioned very reasonable extent.

In conclusion, let me offer you a little advice on the important subject of *small change* for which a sportsman has such frequent occasion *en route*. The current silver coin of France consists of pieces of five francs, two francs, one franc, ten sous and five sous : the copper coin is perhaps the most wretched in Europe. The general mode in which bankers give change for english money is in five franc pieces. Care

should, therefore, be taken to obtain, at least, a few pounds in francs, half francs, and five sous pieces. The french bankers always have them made up in nice rolls of 100—50 and 25 francs each, and will give them, if demanded. This precaution will prevent the loss of much time in searching for change to pay small bills, as well as the disagreeable necessity of carrying a pocket full of sous which rather resemble old buttons than money, and which are so worn and sharp at the edges, that they would cut their way through a meal sack: besides it enables an angler to reward a *gamin*, for disentangling his flies when they are fastened in a willow branch upon the opposite side of a stream, or for catching a mayfly, or a grasshopper, with something under a five franc piece which some economical people might consider rather too much for his trouble, and most anglers like to purchase their grasshoppers *à bon marché*.

CHAPTER II.

THE KEEPERS AND THE GENDARMES.

The mayor and his assistant or deputy, the *garde-champêtre* or *forestier*, and the *gendarmes* are the only persons who are invested with legal authority to demand the production of your *permis de chasse*. The *garde-chasse*, being merely the gamekeeper of a private individual, has no such power.

Sportsmen may be brought before the mayor of the *commune* in which they are found shooting without a *permis de chasse* : this person exercises a summary jurisdiction over all such petty disputes as arise within his district : but, as you will scarcely ever meet him in the field, and must act with considerable imprudence to incur the necessity of your paying him a

visit *chez lui*, it is not necessary to say more of him in this place.

The village mayor is generally an industrious farmer, not over burthened with erudition, legal or otherwise: he will, nevertheless, hear your statement with becoming gravity and decide against you with very little hesitation. Comply with his decree, and thank your stars that matters are no worse.

The *gardes-champêtres* are the persons with whom a sportsman is most likely to come in contact: they have nothing whatever to do with the preservation of the game, and are merely appointed to protect the crops within their respective localities. They are usually quite willing to *listen to reason.*

L'ouverture de la chasse is their jubilee, and, in consideration of a few francs kindly bestowed, they will seldom fail to point out the best haunts in their respective ranges, generously assuming that you are too considerate to injure any of the precious crops intrusted to their faithful keeping. You cannot, therefore, be too courteous to these estimable persons: they are great lovers of a *goutte*, of tobacco, cigars and two franc pieces: in short, they will accept of whatever you may offer them, rather than run the risk of displeasing you. But being exceedingly

conscientious, which is their weak point, they will, when matters are properly adjusted, retire into some convenient wood, or lie down in a clover field, and actually fall asleep, lest they might, by any chance, see you scampering through the uncut wheat, or beans, after a wild dog, or thrashing them out, in a fruitless effort to spring a timid quail.

The *garde-chasse* is not always quite so accommodating; but he is not wholly devoid of redeeming qualities, and will, occasionally, be found to possess the powerful organ of acquisitiveness to such an overwhelming extent that, in spite of his best efforts to resist temptation, he yields to the pressure of a five franc piece. You may perhaps be no craniologist, or, even if you are initiated in that wonderful science, you may not like to run a nice pair of new kid gloves through his greasy locks in search of the requisite protuberance, and, if so, you must adopt some other course; *par exemple:* Begin with a *goutte:* The *garde-chasse*, with the genuine protuberance, never declines a *goutte*. Some keen sportsmen cannot converse with the *garde-chasse* without tossing five franc pieces in the air, and catching them, as they fall, just as if they did not know what to do with them, which is a curious propensity, and which they

call *tickling him* : it is strange, nay almost incredible, how much, the *garde-chasse* sometimes resembles that beautiful model of a trustworthy public servant, the *garde-champêtre*, whom I have already introduced to your notice, without, I trust, saying anything too fulsome, in his praise. Those who deprecate all undue protection of the agricultural interest, must consider him a very sound politician, as well as a very estimable personage : he would make a tip top corn law repealer.

The *gendarmes* are chiefly supplied from the french army, and from the better class of industrious farmers. They are generally men of a most excellent character. They discharge their duty in a quiet and respectful manner. I have never heard any sportsmen complain of them. They merely demand the production of your *permis de chasse* which you must always have about you on those occasions, for, if not, it is optional with them, either to take down your name and address, in order to ascertain whether you have taken out one or not, or to march you into town, upon the supposition that you really have none, which would be neither agreeable nor genteel; and, therefore, in such cases, it behoves you to conciliate their good opinion by a respectful and gentlemanly demeanour,

which is no where exacted, with more punctiliousness than in France, because the French are naturally a very courteous, polite people, and, at once, attribute impoliteness to intentional disrespect which they are not very remarkable for submitting to, either nationally or individually.

CHAPTER III.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS AND USEFUL HINTS.

This little work offers, to the british sportsman, an introduction to the field sports of France; furnishes him with a sketch of the manner in which hunting, shooting and fishing are conducted on the continent, and affords him the means of determining what he can attain by a sporting excursion in France, whether he take with him his gun, or his fishing rod, or wishes to mingle in the joyous chase.

It would be impossible to travel over the entire surface of this extensive country and to render anything like a faithful account of the game and fish, or of the best stations for hunting, shooting and fishing in each *département*: Instead, therefore, of

pretending to execute so impracticable a task, I have adopted the more eligible, but less ostentatious, course of submitting to my readers such available information as my long residence in France, great experience in the field, and trustworthy communications from numerous sporting friends, have enabled me to collect, and content myself with directing them to certain localities where they will unquestionably find the most comfortable accommodations, and abundance of sport.

With such information before him, the british sportsman may consult his own peculiar taste, select some congenial station, and reach his destination with less trouble, fatigue or inconvenience than he must heretofore have encountered in visiting the mountains of Wales, or the Fens of Lincolnshire.

If, gentle reader, you are a hunting sportsman, you may here join in the pursuit of the stag, the wolf or the boar, and calculate upon being received by your brethren with urbanity and kindness: you must, however, never fail to *request permission* to join in the chase, which will always be most freely granted. But if, on the contrary, you disregard those formalities prescribed by the invariable usage of this polite nation, and act as if you came to take their forests by storm,

you must not be surprised if you are taken for, and treated as, a *boar;* and you will soon learn, when we enter on the business of boar hunting, how very unceremoniously they deal with boars in France.

You cannot in any part of Europe meet with finer packs of hounds than those of France. The norman hounds are proverbially excellent, and enjoy the highest reputation amongst our best hunting sportsmen. They are compact, square built dogs; something smaller than our harriers; but they are extremely beautiful; have remarkably handsome heads, large flowing ears and peculiarly fine countenances. It is the prevailing opinion that they are not so fleet as english hounds, but they are said to be much deeper tongued, and, therefore, heard much more distinctly at great distances.

This seeming superiority may perhaps be attributable to the circumstance that the norman packs are much stronger than ours, and that their harmonious cry is borne upon the thousand echoes of these forests where they usually hunt: every sportsman knows the thrilling effect of the cry of hounds when hunting in such localities.

It is also said, that the norman hounds are pecu-

liarly well nosed, and that, like our inimitable beagles; they are scarcely ever at fault. I cannot, however, admit that they possess either the dexterity or sagacity of the irish basket beagle which, you may perhaps be aware, is the smallest, sweetest toned and most indefatigable hunter in existence.

A celebrated irish sportsman, who keeps a few couple of these interesting little animals for hare hunting in his beautiful Demesne, assured me that they once accidentally met with a stray fox, and, much to his astonishment, hunted him. The fox made no exertion to get clear of their company, but led them, in a quiet canter, to a mederately high part of the Demesne wall, where he, no doubt, meant to impound, and take leave of the whole party : but he was mistaken (as calculating people sometimes are), for, just when he was in the act of rising at the leap, three couple of these sagacious little animals most dexterously caught hold of his bushy tail, and were safely landed on the opposite side, where they continued the chase until he was compelled to take refuge in a neighbouring earth.

Now I beg most respectfully to challenge all Normandy, to produce three couple of hounds (not stolen from my friend's pack), of equal dexterity, or a fox

capable of carrying them over such a leap, in the same prompt and sportsmanlike style, and I trust that, until this challenge is accepted, we shall have no more insinuations that we hunt *un misérable renard de sac* for want of better game.*

Is shooting the object of your visit?... You will find France well supplied with game and the shooting sufficiently *open* for all sporting purposes. No longer restricted by the unapproachable preserves, and rigorously defended manors of wealthy monopolists, you may ramble over this fertile country without hinderance or interruption, and freely enjoy your healthful vocation; and you will, by selecting proper localities, which it is part of the object of this little volume to point out, find partridges, quails, woodcocks, snipes, and an endless variety of waterfowl in the greatest abundance.

To have good partridge shooting, it is necessary to be on the ground at the commencement of the season, *à l'ouverture de la chasse.* A good walker, who is a fair average shot, may calculate upon having excellent sport; but, all sportsmen know that, when the cover

* *Nouvelle vénerie normande*, par Edmd Le Masson; published at Avranches, 1844, page 262.—An excellent work.

disappears, and the birds grow wary, little can be expected from partridge shooting, either at home or abroad; whether we assail them, as colonel Hawker recommends, on horseback; or, as most shooting sportsmen prefer, on *a brisk pair of legs.*

Those gentlemen who come to France for partridge shooting should be provided with active and steady dogs, and be prepared to ramble over a wide range of country, as they must make up their minds to beat for, and tumble their birds in a sportsmanlike manner.

A good retriever is also essential to fetch birds out of the uncut crops, as the farmers have not yet agreed upon making any allowance for the over eagerness of young gentlemen who, most unhesitatingly, trample down wheat, beans, and all other crops in searching for wounded birds.

The french laws too, which are, in this respect, sufficiently pinching and uncomfortable, are administered with such rigorous inflexibility, that neither explanation or apology is ever received in mitigation of punishment for this trifling indiscretion: I must, therefore, warn my readers that they cannot, in France, stand upon anybody's *corn* with impunity, and I recommend them not to try the experiment.

As there is no rambling through the stubble fields of France without accasionally meeting the french *chasseurs*, of whom there are many grades, as we shall see in the sequel of this work, it may be useful to introduce some of them to your notice; more especially as it behoves you to be acquainted with some of their habits. They are both in dress and manners a very peculiar class.

The uniform is simple: they wear a dirty *blouse* over a still dirtier pair of trousers, both held together by a shot pouch, strapped round the waist; a large pair of gaiters most ingeniously fastened on by a variety of cross-tyings (the buttons being absent and the button holes worn out); and a *casquette* resembling an old hunting cap; the difficulty being to imagine one sufficiently old to justify the comparison. With respect to features, they really appear to have none: if they have any, they are invisible to the naked eye; not from being themselves naked, for they are covered over with thickly matted greasy hair, or bristles, presenting much the appearance of a hedge hog when rolled up under a dog's nose, and just peeping out occasionally to see if all is right.

Such are the marks and tokens of this unique and eccentric personage: You cannot mistake him: his

habits and manners concern you much more than his singular appearance. He will, when your dogs are on game, walk up with the utmost *sans froid*, and fire at the birds either on the ground or on the wing, without the smallest hesitation, and if you happen to fire at the same time, he will most certainly claim the bird, and insist that you fired in a totally different direction. You may consider this a very impertinent familiarity, feel most indignant, get into a towering passion, and consider that you owe it to society to kick him out of his *blouse* : but I must implore of you to summon up all your forbearance to stifle your indignation, and to try, however difficult the task, to laugh at his insolence.

In all such disputes the *chasseur roturier* will be found an over match for his antagonist, being quite indifferent as to mere questions of *right* or *wrong* : besides you must bear in mind that he is armed with a loaded gun, and has literally *no face* by which he can be identified if he shoots one of your party, a fearful advantage, and one which he well knows how to appreciate.

Wherever shooting or fishing is prohibited, the circumstance is notified to the public by a board on which the words *chasse réservée* or *pêche ré-*

servée appear in large and legible characters. These boards are posted up like those used in England to prevent turnip stealing and such like flagitious crimes and misdemeanors. This *chasse réservée* answers all the purposes of those long and special denunciations, which we sometimes meet, stuck up in certain bogs and mountainous districts, which are said to be poisoned, for the preservation of game, and will occasionally be found to have venom enough in it. I must therefore recommend my brethren to pay it the most scrupulous respect, and, to encourage them in so doing, I can assure them that those attractive words by no means imply the presence of any extraordinary quantity of game within the forbidden precincts. The *braconniers*, who can do the trick without much dread of detection, or perhaps, with the connivance of the *garde chasse*, know where to pay their nocturnal visits, and with the fatal drag net, graphically named *le drap mortuaire*, catch entire covies at each haul, while the vain *propriétaire* enjoys the invidious and unprofitable distinction of possessing a *chasse réservée*, without a brace of birds upon his entire estate.

The *battue system*, now so universally condemned by the sporting world, has existed, from time imme-

morial, both in Europe and Asia; and however justifiable it may be when employed for the destruction of wild beats and noxious animals in countries which are infested by them, there can be no excuse for such proceedings in a royal forest or a private preserve; or for introducing such barbarous brutalities into the field sports of a civilized country. In Tartary, whole tribes of uncivilized men are occasionally engaged for several successive days, in forcing wild beasts and game of every description, into particular districts; and, when thus flocked together, they fall upon them with savage yells, massacre and devour them.

The Germans appear disposed to rival the Tartars in these brutalities, for they have, recently, introduced music to give a more theatrical effect to the death struggles of the poor stag, and even prevailed upon ladies of preeminent distinction, to preside over the brutal orgies.

Those amiable musicians will no doubt, now that the *polka* is becoming so unfashionable, favour us with something in the shape of a *stag hornpipe* to take its place.

The *battue* of Auxerre, in the department of Yonne, in France, is perhaps the most curious on record, and was annually held, from time immemorial, down

to the revolution of 1789, when it was finally abolished.

Thousands of persons flocked into Auxerre, and many came from incredible distances to witness or assist in this ludicrous fête. It was conducted in a novel and very peculiar manner. The beaters, amounting to several thousand persons, were only armed with sticks. They formed an immense circle, so as to prevent the escape of any animal that might be found within its circumference: then, advancing towards its centre, they started the game. The hares, once on foot, kept running to and fro in the gradually contracting space, until tumbled and rolled over by some well directed blow; whereupon there was an immediate rush to gain possession of the prize which was awarded to any person who held it over his head, exclaiming: *à l'autre, à l'autre; celui-ci est bien levé!* But as the hare was no sooner seized by one, than it was snatched from him by another, it was no uncommon occurrence to see it torn to pieces in the scramble, before anybody could perform the prescribed ceremony.

The last *battue royale* on record in France took place in the year 1830, when Charles X treated the king of Naples to one of these unsportsmanlike exhibi-

tions in the noble forest of Compiègnes. The game consisted chiefly of deer and boars. Above 200 of them were massacred, in a few hours, without regard either to age or sex.

British sportsmen who visit France are sometimes tempted to purchase french guns : very respectable looking double barrels may be had at from 200 to 400 francs : but such purchases should not be hastily made, as low priced guns are seldom good; and are frequently most dangerous implements. The barrels are oftentimes very inartificially united; an imperfection which renders them useless, for, when this is the case, they throw the shot inwards, i. e. the right hand barrel throws the shot to the left, the left hand one to the right of the object.

Colonel Hawker, whose authority is conclusive on such matters, tells us, that each barrel should be set rather inwards, to counteract the effect of the recoil which makes them swerve outwards in firing : it is the excess of this allowance, or inclination inwards, that constitutes the very serious defect to which I allude, when it exists, the French say the barrels are *bridés*. Care should also be taken to select a substantial gun, as few light double barrels can be safely depended upon. Indeed the bursting of guns

is, by no means, so uncommon in France as it is in England where it creates a great sensation, and is much spoken of. On the contrary, if a gun bursts in France, and the *chasseur* is seriously wounded, they merely say: *c'est malheureux!* but if he is killed, they say: *c'est fort malheureux!!* and nobody (except perhaps those who may be at the expense of burying him) thinks any more of the matter. In short, if the british sportsman resolves upon having a french gun, he should purchase it from an eminent gunsmith, and not grudge to pay at least 500 francs for a plain mounted, well finished gun, taking particular care that no part of the price is given for mere useless embellishment.

With reference to the choice of gunpowder, which is a matter of vital importance to the shooting sportsman, it may not be amiss to say a few words in this place.

The materials of which gunpowder is made consist of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal, and these ingredients must be pure, judiciously proportioned, and perfectly mixed to produce good powder: the main difficulty is to obtain pure saltpetre as free as possible from marine salt, which is the deteriorating material in the compound: it attracts

atmospherical moisture which reduces the strength of the powder, and prevents its igniting simultaneously. To try the strength of gunpowder nothing can exceed the accuracy of the *éprouvette*, or powder-trier, with which every shooting sportsman should be provided, and which will save him from the mortification of seeing his birds struggling off, severely wounded, instead of *dying in the air*, as they should do when within proper distances.

If, however, you have no *éprouvette*, other tests must be depended upon. In the first place, always select unglazed powder of a dull slate colour : to try its strength, ingnite a little upon white paper : if it is good, it will burn simultaneously, leaving only a grayish spot upon the paper : but, if it is of an inferior quality, it will leave blackish or yellowish spots, or burn the paper.

There are two sorts of powder in pretty general use for shooting purposes in France. The common powder at 4 francs, and the fine powder at 6 francs per pound.

Many sportsmen use the common powder, and say it is sufficiently strong, and that it does not dirty a gun so quickly as fine powder.

At the commencement of the season, when birds

are killed within short distances, it may answer the purpose, but, even then, I prefer, and, therefore, recommend the 6 franc powder, as it is always desirable to command the full range of your gun, and to be prepared to deal, in a sportsmanlike manner, with circumstances as they arise.

Some sportsmen are eternally changing the size of their shot, and are most particular in employing a different size for each sort of game. This has always appeared to me to be an exceedingly unnecessary speculation. Nobody should ever use larger shot than N° 5 for partridge or grouse, or smaller than N° 8 for snipe and mixed shooting. There are numerous advantages in using small shot : the number of the grains is increased; they fall thicker on the birds, and, as they lie more compactly in the barrel, they are propelled with greater regularity and force.

A gentleman, whose pronunciation was not quite parisian, was thrown into great confusion at not being able to find any snipe shot in the city of Nantes : he went from shop to shop, asking for *plumes de bécassine*, instead of *plomb de bécassines* : the shopkeepers, of course, told him they had none.

Colonel Hawker, who is the inventor of the copper caps now in such general use, tells us that : " The

" innumerable accidents which have occurred with " them were occasioned by three causes: 1st, bad " workmanship, in not bringing the blow of the " striker to act equally on all parts of the nipple. " 2ndly, want of proper fence to protect the eye; and, " 3dly, a want of sufficient strength in the first lifting " of the main spring." And he further adds, " that " caps of inferior quality have caused numerous " accidents." *

The low priced french caps which are imported into England, and sold in London at an immense profit, are most dangerous articles. Sportsmen, who value their eyes, should have nothing to do with them; but very fair caps may be purchased in France at from five to six francs per thousand. The best are those manufactured by *Gevelet*. I should, however, recommend sportsmen to provide themselves with copper caps before they leave England, as there is often much difficulty in procuring them to fit the nipples with sufficient exactness, which is a matter of considerable importance.

Mr Péron, 31, rue des Cuisiniers, St-Omer, gunsmith, is always well supplied with gunpowder, shot,

* *Instructions to young sportsmen*, by Col P. Hawker, 6 édition, p. 75.

copper caps, powder flacks and shot pouches which he sells on very reasonable terms—and any gentleman who wishes to have his portrait taken, will find him a very trustworthy and excellent artist, though he is sometimes *cruelly exact* in his resemblances. He had a funny competitor, in this branch of his business, in a gentleman who inserted the following ludicrous advertisement in a provincial newspaper to attract the notice of english residents :

" Any lady wishing to be taken off has one oppor-
" tunity, and will find it very good to try Mr Chat-
" terrini who is descended on the *Petite-Sainte-*
" *Catherine.*

" Mr Chatterrini can show testimonials, of his
" great parts and performance, from distinguished
" Ladies to whom he has given much pleasure."

If fishing be the object of your visit, you will find this fertile country in every direction intersected by rivers, many of which are abundantly supplied with trout of respectable size * and quality, and conduct

* Châteaubriand in his *Voyages en Amérique*, 1 vol. p. 155, tells us " that the trout, in lake Huron, exceed 200 "pounds weight." You will scarcely catch any quite so large in France, but you may get some of six pounds weight, and will be very lucky if you do.

the angler through the most romantic scenery.

If you are a sketcher, a botanist or an entomologist, you will find many objects worthy of scientific notice, and upon which you may advantageously employ whatever skill you possess.

This beautiful country is little known to those tourists who rumble on to Paris in an unwieldy diligence, and content themselves with a mere transitory glance at the rich crops and highly cultivated fields through which they pass; and, who, turning with disgust from those stiff rows of pruned up and mopheaded elm trees which rather disfigure, than ornament the public roads, hastily decide that there is nothing worth seeing in the rural districts of France. They are sadly mistaken. The delicious and picturesque scenery of her beautiful valleys; the foaming cascades and rushing torrents of her mountain streams, with their winding wooded and verdant banks, are all reserved for the admiration and enjoyment of the enthusiastic angler who, so well, knows how to appreciate them.

After fishing down the Canche and the Aa, and passing a few days upon the Meuse and descending that noble river, in some of the comfortable steamers that navigate its waters, the angler may form an ad-

equate notion of the richness and beauty of french scenery, and will have no reason to regret his excursion.

It must be gratifying to the british angler to know that, while wandering along these lovely banks, and casting his gaudy flies upon their rippling streams, he is surrounded by a kind and friendly people; and that, when overtaken by the thunder storm which, in these localities, bursts forth almost instantaneously, and is accompanied by the heaviest and most overwhelming torrent of rain that can well be imagined, he may seek shelter in their humble dwellings, where he will be received with a degree of courteous politeness which would reflect no discredit upon a much higher grade. They will crowd about him like old and familiar acquaintances, admire his delicate tackle, gaze upon his dazzling flies, communicate all the local information they possess with a frankness that doubles its intrinsic value : and upon his departure wish him the most brilliant success in their own beautifully concise phraseology : *à la bonne pêche.*

Their kind and complimentory good wishes are unfortunately, on these occasions, seldom of any avail, for the river becomes disturbed, thickened and

discoloured to such an extent, that a trout could scarcely see the angler himself (not to speak of a black gnat or a tiny red palmer), in the water: indeed the most pertinacious fisherman will, at a single glance discover that "his occupation is gone" and that nothing remains but to get home with all possible expedition, pay for his *carriole,* and console himself with a prime bottle of St-Emilion, or anything else he likes better; *pauvre homme!*

We cannot contemplate the desinterested kindness, and extreme simplicity of the french peasants, without feeling a very warm interest in their welfare. They have oftentimes reminded me of that living exemplification of universal philanthropy "the irish peasant" who would cheerfully divide his last meal with the unknown visitor of his rustic habitation. When we reflect how little he possesses, the small sum total of all his earthly hopes and wishes, and the contentment with which he endures such numerous privations, we cannot but behold him with wonder and admiration, and feelingly deplore that he should ever be made restless, turbulant and factious, by the grasping avarice of an embarrassed landlord, or the reckless ambition of designing politicians who are ready to traffic in his peace, or in his

blood, under the pretext of some spurious sentiment which he is too artless and too honest to detect. *Mais revenons à nos moutons.*

The french peasantry are a moral and religious people and exceedingly industrious. Their cabins are built of a framework of timber which is filled up with clay and chopped straw well tempered together: they are thatched like the better description of irish cabins: they are often neatly plastered and whitened on the outside and form a pleasing feature in the surrounding landscape. They are generally collected in villages, and seldom built along the high roads, and have comfortable and well cropped gardens attached to them. In these gardens you will see abundance of very luxuriant looking leeks, onions, turnips, carrots, cabbage, peas, beans and pot herbs, of which they make much use, as their common food consists of brown bread and vegetable soup, with, perhaps, a morsel of butter or lard thrown in to render it more palatable, but they seldom eat animal food.

In some villages they have an excellent system of baking their bread. For this purpose they keep a public oven for the use of their little community, and sustain it at their common expense. Each family

sends its supply of bread, together with fuel in proportion to its amount, to the public bakery, where some judiciously selected villager, of sufficient skill and integrity, fills the honorary office of baker general, without fee or emolument; but who, in all probability, gets comfortably married, and well settled in life, on the strength of his reputation for turning out a well baked loaf, and does not, we may conjecture, forget the *kissing crust* when his *bonne amie* comes for her share.

I was once accidentally driven into one of these village bakeries, just at the critical moment to see the large round loaves heaped up, piping hot like miniature mill stones, on the clean brick floor, yielding a most inciting and agreeable scent.

The good people perceived that I was overhauling their stock in trade, and very politely offered me some: but, as I had a sufficient luncheon in my *panier*, and no inclination to diminish their frugal supply, I contented myself with a mere taste which I considered, and pronounced, excellent. A good humoured, buxom, red headed lass, whose large round face rivalled, in its benign circumference, the huge loaf she held before her, by way of politely sustaining my judgment, pronounced her ready acquiescence

in that curious and idiomatic phrase *pas mauvais*, accompanied with a graceful and significant gesture which extinguished all doubt as to her true meaning, and complimentary intentions.

The costume of the peasantry is, in some parts of France, worthy of notice. In Britany, for instance, the women wear a dark coloured *corsage*, and petticoats extending to their ankles, scarlet aprons, and remarkably high muslin caps not infrequently trimmed with expensive lace, and present an interesting and strikingly picturesque appearance. The men wear jackets, trousers and a black cravat: they somewhat resemble our discharged seamen before they get rid of the *ready*. They are all comfortable and industrious in their habits. Their chestnut and walnut trees produce abundant crops, and the manner in which they collect the fruit is curious. All the boys and girls in the neighbourhood are assembled for the purpose: they clamber up the trees, beat down the fruit, take half for their trouble, and leave the other moiety for the *propriétaire*.

Whatever may be the condition of the french and british peasantry, or the amount of the wants or privations they may and must sometimes endure, they cannot turn to the poor degraded russians without

exulting in the freedom they enjoy, and in their great moral superiority.

The russian peasant belongs to the proprietor of his native soil : he cannot leave the estate without permission, and he can only purchase that permission by the payment of an exorbitant tax. This is not a bad sample of an *absentee tax* than which nothing can be more odious, arbitrary or despotic ; the maliciousness of modern legislation could invent nothing more revolting to the feelings of a british subject.

Let us see the effect of this tyranny upon the russian serf, for he is no more, and he cannot be much less.

Le marquis de Custine informs us that the russian serf is totally destitute of all moral sentiment, and that he has no feeling of parental or conjugal affection. He gives the following curious instance of his extraordinary apathy on the tenderest of all sore points amongst civilized people.

A clever mechanic, who was exercising his trade at St-Petersburg, got permission to visit his family in his native village. On his return, his employer asked him whether he was content with the condition in which he found his family, after so long an absence? He replied : Quite content; *my wife presented me with two children which she had during*

*my absence, and I was delighted with them.** Surely, the day cannot be far distant when Russia will burst through chains screwed so tightly upon her increasing population, and relieve Europe from a spectacle of such disgraceful barbarity.

How widely different are the feelings and sentiments of the lower orders, in France, from those of the apathetic mechanic in the Marquis de Custine's narration!

The following little memoir will serve to illustrate the native warmth, and impetuosity of the french character when excited by such stiring considerations.

A gentleman of large fortune, who recently died in the town of St-Omer, left a handsome legacy to his faithful housekeeper, which soon rendered her, though on the wrong side of 40, an object of considerable attraction. She accordingly drew her long train of admirers through the endless labyrinth of that complicated and bewitching passion, being too kind to refuse and too timid to accept of their

* *Russia, in* 1829, par Mr le Marquis de Custine. Vol. 3, p. 108.

addresses. It will be sufficient for me to mention two of her ardent lovers: one was a gay *commis voyageur*, of no mean personal appearance, whose jet black and curling whiskers and soft *moustache* indicated a warm and vigorous constitution, and whose unceasing exertions in the recommendation of the cheapest and best steel pens manufactured in France had given him the most gracious and persuasive address: in short, he was irresistibly infatuating and not quite six and twenty.

The other was a most respectable tradesman in comfortable circumstances; had been a good husband and was an affectionate father. I need go no farther: She accepted of the *commis voyageur*. In a blushful, but creditably firm, manner, the day was fixed by her for the consummation of their happiness. In the mean time, the betrothed *commis voyageur* was compelled, whether by the want of steel pens in London, or the superabundant supply of them in France, I have not learned; but he was compelled to visit London for an entire fortnight. They parted as lovers, as betrothed lovers, and affectionate lovers have always, and, it is to be hoped, ever shall part on such trying occasions. Of course it was strictly enjoined that he should write to her from Calais,

and from Dover, and from Canterbury, and from London; and in short, that he should be continually writing to her while he remained in England; and she gave him a nice little pot of some particular sort of jelly which was perfectly infallible in curing colds, and which, she assured him, she found effectual for 30 years: it slipped from her, and could not be recalled: for 30 years! adding that she gave him this valuable recipe because she was credibly informed, and fully believed, that it never ceased raining in England, except while it was snowing.

Before the fortnight expired, a particular letter arrived from Manchester, (one, I presume, of an unpublished series, on their mutual affection), which she tore open in the usual haste, read with the usual avidity, and flung on the table with the usual indignation under such heart rending circumstances; not that it really was designed to occasion such agitation, or that it contained anything that we should consider at all alarming; but, when I inform you that a gentleman, some years since, blew out his brains (such as they were), because his *chère amie*, who he positively intended should be betrothed to him, indiscreetly gave his supposed rival, who had no such intentions, more sugar in his tea than she

gave him, you will be prepared to treat the matter more seriously, and to form a more just estimate of the propriety and dignity of her conduct.

I may now venture to tell you, that the letter contained a positive announcement that his employers had odered him to visit Manchester; and that he could not reach France for six days after the day fixed upon for their marriage; but that he was in good health, etc., etc.

I shall not transcribe the rest of that fatal letter; it would be unjust to do so, because she read no farther, and, from her nice perception of the infidelity and unworthiness it so clearly betrayed, it could not be reasonably expected that she would read any more of his detested writing. She, therefore, without any unnecessary delay, put on her bonnet and pattens, took her cloak and umbrella, and proceeded at once to the abode of the comfortable tradesman, and straightway tendered unto him her heart and hand, which he gladly accepted. All the preparations for the wedding were made, and she was accordingly married at the time and place originally intended. Nothing was changed, but the husband. But there was a secret flame which could not be extinguished: she had feverish dreams at night, and maddening

reflections by day; she discovered the infidelity was her own; she pined away for six months in the excruciating torture of bitter remorse, and then terminated her own insupportable existence.

It may be reasonably presumed that all tourists, who visit the continent, are provided with Murray's excellent guide-books, from which they will obtain all requisite information on the subject of cathedrals, gothic buildings, public libraries, museums, picture galleries, and lists of the good, bad and indifferent hotels.

My hints, useful or otherwise, must therefore travel in a different direction, and must contract themselves within the very narrow compass of the few pages I can devote to such matters.

In perambulating the rural districts of France, you will meet the *berger*, or french shepherd, his dogs and flock. You may see him basking in the sun, perhaps asleep, while his sagacious dogs are guarding his flock in the midst of *unfenced crops*: they devide the prescribed boundaries between them, and keep running backwards and forwards, quickly or slowly according to the exigencies of the case: a look, from one of those dogs, is quite sufficient to warn off any sheep disposed to approach too near to the forbidden fruit.

How they are trained, or brought, to such wonderful perfection, I cannot conjecture: it appears to me to be perfectly miraculous, and is worth your consideration.

You may never have heard of the *troupeaux de la Mesta*, which, in the sixteenth century, employed 60,000 *bergers*. The sheep then amounted to seven millions. At present they exceed five millions: they are divided into flocks of 2000 each, with a *Mayoral*, fifty *bergers*, and fifty dogs to conduct them. They traverse the vast tracks of uncultivated land in the arid plains of Estremadura, and, in their destructive progress, sweep away every thing in the shape of vegetation.

These spanish *bergers* enjoy numerous privileges,* some of which are extremely prejudicial to the peasantry of the country, who dread their approach as much as the arrival of the devouring flights of grasshoppers which, sometimes, eat up the most luxuriant crops in a few minutes.

I was once catching grasshoppers for bait, to fish for the enormous roach carp occasionally taken in the *fossés* round the ramparts of St.-Omer, and was

* *Histoire d'Espagne et de Portugal*, par M. Em. Lefranc.

accosted by a french gentleman who wished to know what I wanted with them : being a very candid person, I informed him that they were, if used in sufficient quantity, a great addition to pea-soup. He said he would certainly try them. I afterwards met him, and he said that they had no particular flavour that he could discover; but required *beaucoup de poivre*. I recommended him to have the next batch broiled, and to try *cayenne* with them. *Oui, oui, oui : je l'essaierai; bonjour, Monsieur.*

The markets are worth your notice. The vegetable markets, which are generally spread over the *grand'place* or some equally spacious locality, present a very animated and picturesque scene. They are formed by the wives and daughters of the peasants and small farmers who, each, have their neatly made up bunches of most tempting looking vegetables before them. The turnips, carrots and roots of all sorts are so well washed and so fresh and clean that they exhibit their vivid colours in a most strikingly beautiful manner. A painter might, in these markets, pick up some curious clusters of vegetables accidentally thrown together and most harmoniously contrasted with each other. The women are not particularly handsome, but they are remarkably neat and

smart looking in their simple dresses and snow white caps.

If you take a peep into the fish and fowl markets, you will see abundance of game and fresh water fish, of all sorts in season, selling at reasonable prices.

Before you quit those scenes you will be attracted by that most singularly grotesque character, the *charlatan* who plays his fiddle, sings his ballads and goes through a sort of theatrical performance for the gratification of the most irredeemably rakish looking circle of admirers you ever beheld: you may make one of them, if it suits your fancy; and you will find his costume, gestures and grimaces ludicrous in the extreme. He is generally mounted upon a chair, and often has his wife, or *chère amie, (que vous importe)?* upon another, aiding and assisting, as she is in duty bound, in all his humorous vagaries, and accompanying him on her tambarine generally to the tune of no tune at all.

The tea-gardens are also worth a visit. There you will see the respectable middle classes, and many of their inferiors, waltzing and dancing quadrilles together with the strictest propriety and good manners. You will find no loose straggling, half intoxicated rake, interrupting the amusement of the

evening, merely because it is not exactly suited to his own taste or distempered imagination.

You may dance, if you know how, and have any fancy for so doing: no disengaged female will refuse to dance with you, provided you can just get your tongue about french enough to prevent your being mistaken for an eskimaux, which is desirable.

The tea-gardens afford much gratifying evidence of the superiority and refinement of the lower classes in France.

In England good manners don't descend so low.

If you are a lover of music you will have frequent opportunities of hearing exquisite military bands, and of attending concerts where many eminent amateur, and professional musicians laudably contribute their aid to create a fund for the relief of the poor.

The theatres in provincial towns are scarcely worth your notice; but if you admire equestrian skill, and chance to fall in with Mr Franconi's troop, I recommend you to pay a visit to his *cirque équestre.*

Those who come to reside on the continent for the education of children, or who are likely to remain for any considerable period, will find it their advantage to take a house and to furnish it for themselves, and

should not buy expensive furniture, as they cannot calculate on selling it again as advantageously as less costly ware which may answer quite as well.

I must also most strongly recommend my readers, whenever they take either a house or lodgings, to have the agreement approved of by an *avocat*: his fee is only 5 francs, and it will prevent their being involved in disputes from which it is not easy to get extricated: unwritten promises are not binding, and are seldom faithfully recollected.

Those who come to France for the education of children cannot select a more suitable place than St.-Omer. If they wish to go into society, and procure proper introductions, they will find the leading society of St.-Omer of a very superior character, and the french gentry a liberal, high minded, and most estimable people.

Many fastidious persons, on their first arrival in France, condemn the unreserved manners of the French, in certain matters which our peculiar notions of delicacy induce us to conceal with the most scrupulous care, as if all the world was bound to conform to the british standard, and that it was the model of perfection.

Now, that is certainly too high ground for John

Bull, esquire, to maintain; even if he was three times as big as he really is, that sort of extravagant self sufficiency is only fit for an american President, who quietly lays his finger on the oregon territory, and talks as if he could slip it like a mince pie into his capacious trousers-pocket, and run away, and eat it before any body could overtake him.

You should mix with your estimable neighbours, on the continent, with a fixed determination never to find fault with national habits and customs which were adopted, and approved of, long before you were born; and which will survive you whether you approve of them or not.

I assure you that you will find much to admire, and very little to find fault with, in persons of your own grade in France.

I once travelled from Lille to Dunkerque in company with a french gentleman and his wife, and found them very agreeable companions.

When we reached Cassel, the diligence drew up at a hotel in a position which enabled the company to see, through a *porte cochère*, into a court yard in the corner of which stood a small, and oftentimes very convenient building, which I shall not otherwise name. Monsieur called to the conducteur to open the

door of the *coupé*. The door was instantly opened. The gentleman no sooner got out, than he took possession of that identical small building in the remote angle of the little court yard: but he was scarcely there when the lady owing perhaps to some sympathetic affection, (which it is not my business to investigate), descended from the diligence with great rapidity, and, addressing her husband in great haste, called out in a very audible voice: *Dépêchez-vous, mon mari, je suis bien pressée.... j'ai beaucoup à faire.... la diligence va partir.... dépêchez-vous donc.... vite, vite, vite. — Eh bien, répondit le mari, je garderai un morceau pour l'ancienne ville de Dunkerque.* And, to do the gentleman justice, he very promptly attended to her call and though some old fashioned people might say he should have finished his *toilette* before he made his appearance, better informed and more polished persons will applaud his consideration and politeness... You will be glad to hear that the fair lady was in time for the diligence, and not, a little proud of her despatch.

PART FIRST.

ON HUNTING.

CHAPTER I.

LE LIMIER : THE BLOODHOUND.

It is necessary to say a few words about the *limier*, before we enter upon the subject of stag hunting. We must find a stag before we can hunt him, and that important duty is confided to the *valet de limier* and his intelligent dog.

In ancient times the *limier* discharged many of those duties now intrusted to our efficient police, and afforded considerable assistance in detecting the retreat of malefactors, and in bringing them to justice.

The Spaniards have not as yet dispensed with their aid in such matters, and still employ them, in the Island of Cuba, in negro hunting. When placed on the track of a negro, they never quit it until they overtake the unhappy fugitive, who, at once, surrenders himself to his barbarous pursuers, well knowing that escape is impossible and that, if he attempt it, he will be torn to pieces.

We shall now see what part the *limier* performs in the field sports of France.

The *limier* should be judiciously selected: a dark coloured, quick sighted, well nosed and strong built dog is essential for the faithful discharge of his laborious duties. He is far from being easily trained: on the contrary, it requires, at least, three years severe schooling to finish his education, in the course of which great management is necessary, for he is very apt to sulk, and, if he does, there is much danger of his becoming perfectly intractable, and utterly useless.

It is a curious fact that the *limier* is sometimes

found to have so strong a natural antipathy to the boar, that he cannot be prevailed upon to hunt him. In these instances, the moment he picks up the scent of the boar, he runs behind his *valet* like a spaniel after having trodden on a snake, and becomes quite powerless.

When the *valet de limier* goes in search of a stag, he takes his *limier* on the leash, and never allows him to run at large, even for an instant; his business being to trace out, and not to chase the animal,* they proceed together, much in the same affectionate manner as the blind beggar-man and his dog, mutually pulling at and dragging each other, until the *limier* conducts him to the fatal thicket where the noble stag is lying in his lair.

The *valet de limier* requires (as will be seen hereafter), much scientific knowledge and considerable ability to execute this, apparently very simple task, with any chance of success, for he must ascertain both the age and sex of the animal without getting a single glimpse at him.

To enable him to perform this arduous duty, he

* See the *valet de limier* and his *limier* on the leash, at the commencement of this chapter.

receives a suitable education. The french *valets de limier* are generally educated in Germany, where there are numerous public establishments for the purpose, and where they are instructed with becoming solicitude in every branch of their difficult profession. It is perfectly wonderful what expertness they sometimes acquire. There are volumes upon volumes written for their guidance in which, (as in many other scientific works), the rules are so frittered away by their never ending and complicated exceptions, that the more one studies them, the more difficult they appear.

DEER HUNTING.

CHAPTER II.

LE CERF : THE STAG.
LA BICHE : THE HIND OR DOE.

Stag hunting, which has for ages been the favourite recreation of the kings of France, is everywhere held in high estimation and is, from time to time, conducted with much pomp and magnificence in the royal forests of Fontainebleau,* Compiègne** and Chantilly.***

* The noble forest of Fontainebleau abounds in stags and deer, etc. and has been long celebrated for its hunting. It contains the finest trees in France, and the greatest variety of them. It is situated in the departement of the Seine and Marne, upon the high road from Paris to Lyons. The palace is one of the most magnificent in France. It was in it Napoléon held Pope Pius VII prisoner, for two years; and it was in it that

The preparatory arrangements for a stag hunt are both curious and interesting.

The hind is never hunted, and the stag is not considered sufficiently strong for the chase, until he attains his sixth year. It, therefore, becomes essential to proceed with considerable caution in order to procure a suitable animal, without disturbing the

he abdicated his throne in 1814. His majesty Louis-Philippe has expended enormous sums in decorating and improving the palace.

There are some fine pieces of water in the beautiful gardens of Fontainebleau which abound in carp of extraordinary size. The forest contains 35,000 acres, and the population of the town exceeds 9,000.

** The extensive forest of Compiègne contains 30,000 acres, and is intersected by numerous roads and green alleys well arranged for hunting. It contains some of the finest oak in France and abundance of stags and deer, etc. It is situated near the confluence of the Oise and the Aisne on the Flanders road. The palace is well situated between the town and the Forest. It was considerably improved by Napoléon who erected the grand gallery (400 feet in length, 40 in breadth and 50 in height), which is so justly admired. It was at the siege of Compiègne that the celebrated Maid of Orléans was made prisoner, in 1430.

*** The forest of Chantilly contains 7,000 acres, in the midst of which is a circular area called the *Table ronde*

hind or those deemed too young for the sport.

This critical duty devolves upon the *valets de limier*, who accordingly proceed to the forest accompanied by their well trained *limiers*, and soon discover the fresh tracks of the deer. An experienced *valet de limier* is competent to decide on the age and sex of the animal from an inspection of its tracks, not by any plain, infallible mark, which at once and definitively settles the question, but by the due consideration of various nice distinctions by which he is guided in his scientific and minute investigation.

In case the season is too dry, and the soil not in a condition to receive or retain a faithful impression of the stag's foot, the intelligent *valet de limier* is not thereby deprived of all means of executing his delicate task, but is in such cases driven to decide upon more difficult, and less satisfactory, grounds. He is obliged to search for the *fumée*, or dung, of the animal, (which

from which 12 roads branch off in different directions, which used to be the *rendez-vous* of hunting parties in the olden times when St-Hubert's day was so well kept at Chantilly by the illustrious house of Condé. Chantilly now belongs to the duke d'Aumale, fourth son of his majesty Louis-Philippe to whom it descended in 1830. It is well supplied with game.

french writers say is of three sorts, *formée, en troche,* or *en plateaux),* by which he can also determine its age and sex.

The *fumée* is no sooner found than it is eagerly snatched up, examined, dissected, handed from one to another, and even tasted without the smallest repugnance.

The *valets de limier* consult, disagree, grow warm in the dispute, and often eat the entire *fumée en plateaux,* before they can dispose of the question at issue.*

Having thus found the trail of a suitable stag, they proceed with extreme caution to trace him out, following up the scent with the *limier* on the leash, until they arrive at some thicket, or some dense part of the forest, where they conceive the animal is lying in his lair. They cannot approach sufficiently near to see him, lest he might be alarmed and take flight: so they go round the suspected spot, carefully examining every opening through which he might have escaped, and trying them well with the *limier.*

If they cannot discover any trail leading out of the

* See the *valets de limier* in such consultation in the frontispiece.

thicket, they conclude that he still remains within the circle they have so described, and that their task is faithfully executed.

Having thus performed their duty, they render a full and circumstantial account of everything they have done and seen; and frequently, at the same time, deliver a portion of the *fumée en plateaux* to their superior officer, that he may, after the fullest consideration, determine what degree of reliance can be placed on their report, and on the conclusion at which they have arrived. The superior officer to whom their report is so submitted, being a person who is himself raised from the rank of *valet de limier*, and promoted for his superior skill and intelligence, is thoroughly well versed in all the intricacies of his profession, and fully competent to solve any difficulty that may arise, so that there is little danger of any disappointment when he decides in favour of their report, and adopts their views.

The *valets de limier* then return to the forest, accompanied by the huntsman aud his attendants to keep watch on the devoted stag. The huntsman selects proper positions for his relays, and disposes of them accordingly.

These relays consist of separate packs of hounds

which are posted at different points, so as to be prepared for the chase, in whatever direction the stag may take when roused from his lair.

The *piqueurs* are also at their posts, and remain mounted with their respective packs. The office of *piqueur* is one of considerable importance. It is their special business to watch the movements of the stag, and, by all the means in their power, to defeat any *ruse* he may attempt to play off in the course of the chase. They examine his track, and endeavour to discover something peculiar in its form, by which it may be distinguished from the track of other deer : such peculiarities arise from a thousand little accidents, and are of vast importance to the *piqueur* when he can discover them. He is always

Le Piqueur.

well mounted, and well acquainted with the forest

and country around him, and with the habits of the animal he hunts, and seldom fails to extricate his pack from any difficulty in which they may be involved.

Such are the formal and preliminary arrangements that precede a royal stag hunt. When they are all completed, the august company assembles in all its courtly splendour. The ladies, mounted on their gentle steeds; or seated in their light and elegant carriages, shed an additional lustre on the animating scene, while an intense anxiety pervades and agitates the gay assemblage.

When all is ready, the huntsman rouses the noble stag, and away he dashes at rail road speed. The shrill signal to uncouple the hounds is immediately given, reechoed by numerous trumpets and horns, and instantly obeyed.

The impatient hounds are no sooner uncoupled, and laid on the fresh track, than they dash off in full cry, and all unite in the joyous chase.

> Unharbour'd now the royal stag forsakes
> His wonted lair; he shakes his dappled sides
> And tosses high his beamy head, the copse,
> Beneath his antlers, bends. What doubling shifts
> He tries! not more the wily hare, in these

Would still persist, did not the full-mouth'd pack
With dreadful concert thunder in his rear.
The woods reply, the hunter's cheering shouts
Float thro' the glades, and the wide forest rings,
Now merrily they chant! Their nostrils deep
Inhale the grateful steam. Such is the cry.

SOMERVILLE'S CHASE.

On the other hand, when hard pressed, the stag endeavours, by various stratagems, to eludc his enemies: he sometimes runs into the lair of another stag and thus tries to turn the dogs upon fresh game: again he dashes into the midst of a herd of deer, and forces one of them to single out from the rest that he may become the object of pursuit, or bounds over drains, roads, and hedges, to break off the scent and to baffle the hounds. But the active and intelligent *piqueurs* keep an unceasing watch on all his movements and counteract all his contrivances.

If he reaches the brink of a river, he plunges into the most rapid part of the current, and swims down the stream for a considerable distance, before he crosses it, or takes up his abode in some wooded island where he can conceal himself.

When the stag takes the soil, it is often the signal that the final conflict is approaching: he is then soon

at bay, ready to sell his life at its highest purchase, and to give battle when he can no longer fly for protection.

. . . . . resolved to die,
He fears no more, but rushes on his foes
And deals his deaths around, beneath his feet,
These grov'ling lie, those by his antlers gor'd
Defile th'ensanguin'd plain.

SOMERVILLE'S CHASE.

This was formerly a serious fight, and was usually terminated by some daring hunter who, courageously, closed in upon his well armed foe, and cut him down with his *couteau de chasse*. *Le vieux cerf*, in those conflicts, has frequently strew'd his grave with both dogs and men.*

But a less dangerous and, it must be admitted, a more refined method, has been adopted in modern times, to terminate the unequal contest: The noble animal is now treated to a *coup de fusil*, and thus drops before his merciless pursuers.

Such is the termination of a royal stag hunt.

* As is attested by a monument raised to the memory of the duc de Melun who, in 1725, was killed near Chantilly by a stag he hunted and attempted to cut down.

As soon as the chase is over, the stag is skinned and cut up. The haunches, and such parts as may be required for the table, find their way to the royal kitchen: the remainder is carefully rolled up in the skin, and placed as if the animal were lying in his lair. The *piqueur* sounds the *view*, and the *valet de chiens* encourages the hounds and urges them to make a hearty meal on their well earned prize.

The horns, the noble antlers of the *vieux cerf*, form a splendid trophy for the king's sporting cabinet, or may be disposed of by his majesty's huntsman when it is, I presume, understood that the hounds eat them.

Those who hunt this noble animal with less pomp and ceremony, usually proceed to search for him in his ordinary haunts, either with the limier on the leash, or with a few steady old dogs under the most perfect command. When a suitable stag is found, these sagacious animals are drawn off, and the pack, kept in reserve, laid on the scent, when the business of the day commences. If such precautions were not taken, much mischief might be done in the forest by disturbing the hind and the young deer. The Normans, it is said, are sometimes too impatient to adopt this cautious and judicious course,

and occasionally search for the stag with the pack intended for the chase; a practice which is justly condemned by the highest authorities on the subject.

Monsieur Le Masson, in his *nouvelle vénerie normande*, which is an excellent work, and will be found a desirable addition to any gentleman's sporting library, gives an account of a singular stag hunt which took place in the department of Seine and Oise, in the month of nov^r^ 1835: the stag was found in the wood of Rochefort by the hounds of Monsieur le Baron de Schikler, a sportsman of great celebrity in that department.

The relays were stationed in the direction of Rambouillet and Dourdan: *le cerf dix cors* took the direction of Arpagon, entered the wood of Biscorne, traversed the forest of Marcoussy, the woods of Charmeaux and Carmes, the valley of Chevreuse, near d'Orsay, entered the wood of Pilleux, gained the forest of Verrières, took the water at Meudon, gave battle near the park and got into a washerwoman's court yard, above Sèvres, after a run of four hours and a half. Monsieur le Masson states that it would be necessary to have witnessed that extraordinary chase to form a correct notion of its wonderful swiftness, and of the difficulties le Baron de Schikler's

superior hounds had to encounter on that memorable occasion.

The relays were thrown out of play and the whole was accomplished by 32 hounds without further assistance. They passed thro' thick forests, *marais* and wet lands, with such rapidity that the very best horses could scarcely keep pace with them, and, in the forest of Meudon where they had to deal with several fresh deer tracks, held on to the hunted stag, with such ability and decision, that they never lost a moment in the whole run.*

Red deer are now rather scarce in France, but are still found in numerous extensive forests belonging to the state, many of which are rented by distinguished sportsmen who, thus, secure the enjoyment of their favourite amusement.

Amongst those forests we may enumerate the forests of St-Sever and Cerisy in the department of Calvados, the former in the vicinity of Vire and the latter near St-Lo. They are both very extensive forests, and are rented by sportsmen for hunting purposes. The forest of Andaine or Domfront and

* For a full account of this extraordinary run, and others of equal interest see *Nouvelle Vénerie normande*, p. 182.

the forest of Alençon, in the department of Orne, both of very considerable extent, and, in like manner, rented by sportsmen.

The forest of Lyons, in the department of Eure, which is also rented by sportsmen.

The forests of Maulévriez, Brothonne, Verte, Roumare, Lalonde and Rouvray, in the department of Seine inférieure, none of which are, I believe, at present rented by sportsmen.

There are also red deer in the Ardennes, and in numerous forests throughout France.

Red deer were very abundant in Germany; but suffered much during the late war, as the brave troops of the empire were rather addicted to deer shooting. We are told that in the year 1809, when the french soldiers were in possession of Vienna, they killed all the deer in the magnificent park *le Prater*, adjoining that city: even the common soldiers killed them in dozens!*

The stag is known by different names, according to his age. Until he attains six months, he is called *faon* or fawn: he then loses his spotted appearance, acquires a uniform colour and the name of *hère*

Vienne, par JEAN PEZZL; p. 503.

(which signifies a sorry fellow, a poor wretch).

From one to two years old, he gets those horns called *les dagues* from their resemblance to daggers, and hence takes the name of *daguet* or *pricket;* at three years old, he is called *seconde tête;* at four years old, *troisième tête;* at five years old, *quatrième tête;* at six years old, *dix cors jeunement;* at seven years old, *dix cors;* at eight years old, he acquires the distinguished title of *vieux cerf*, and afterwards becomes a majestic *grand vieux cerf.*

The old stags shed their horns in the month of february; *le cerf dix cors*, in March, and the others (except the *daguets)*, in april, and the *daguets* not until june. When the stag sheds his horns, he retires into some remote part of the forest where there is good pasturage, and remains there in solitude until his horns are replenished, which requires, at least, three months; and during this period he frequently plunges them into the soil which, according to its peculiar nature, gives them a brown, red or yellowish colour. It is certainly a circumstance worthy of notice, that the stag is furnished with such splendid horns, in so very short a period, and that they acquire such extraordinary strength and hardness during their rapid growth.

When the stag is furnished with his splendid antlers, and has recovered from the effects of so great a draught upon his constitution, *il songe à sa postérité*, he enters upon the rut, and becomes most furious: he attacks every thing he meets, and cannot be approached without considerable danger. He rests neither night nor day ; eats but little, and fights his brethren with the utmost inveteracy : in these conflicts they sometimes get their branching horns so entangled in each other, that they cannot separate them, and die of starvation.

Charles IX, in his treatise on hunting, informs us that he had stags horns, in his cabinet at Fontainebleau, so entangled in those conflicts, that they could not be separated by any contrivance.

Though the stag cannot, at any period of his life, be considered anything of a singer, he undoubtedly has a most powerful voice, and, during the rutting season, makes no small use of it : he fills the forest with the most hideous and horrifying noises imaginable ; he commences at sun-set, and continues during the whole night.

Various authors assure us that the benighted traveller who hears his serenade for the first time, be he ever so brave, will shudder with fright... No bad

sample of a singer who keeps it up all night.

The stag has some very peculiar habits: he is quite a temperance society gentleman during the winter, which is just the period when you or I would like a good glass of chambertin and a bit of jocose conversation in some snug corner: to use the appropriate phrase, he never touches a drop of anything in the winter: the dew on the grass suffices to quench his thirst: but this dew sipping system yields to better taste in the summer months, and particularly in the sultry season when he lapses into perfect drunkenness; and, not content with the most liberal potations, he plunges into rivers, lakes and ponds, as if he could never get enough of it, and even swims into the briny deep to cool himself.

The stag is an animal of noble dimensions and of a beautiful rotundity of form, he has long and slender legs, brilliant eyes, a most acute sense of hearing, and the nicest olfactory nerves in the universe, and is an accomplished swimmer. He stands about three feet and a half in height, and nothing can exceed the beauty of his neck, head and branching antlers: he feeds on the bark of trees, grass, moss, etc.

Winter and spring are the best seasons for stag hunting: he is too much reduced in the rutting season

to afford any sport; when it terminates, he retires into some remote part of the forest to renovate his constitution which, however, is very soon accomplished.

The Hind has seldom more than one fawn, but may have two: They are sometimes barren, and are then called *Brehaignes*, and are said occasionally to have horns. This, however, appears to be a disputed question, and the assertion is probably without foundation.

Though the stag is a much more noble animal than the roebuck, its venison is not so higly esteemed.

A celebrated gastronomist assures us, that it has not the fragrance, the flavour, or the marrowy unctuosity that distinguishes the delicious venison of the roebuck.

To taste the stag in perfection, he should be killed in full season, just after he has refurnished his horns, and before the rutting commences, namely in july and august. *Le jeune cerf* is good at all seasons.

In former times, when the anatomy of the stag was better understood than it is at present, hunters found a small cross-shaped bone in the stag's heart, which possessed many medical virtues, but which has not been discovered in the heart of any modern stag:

that you may form a just estimate of the loss we sustain in not being able to discover *la croix du cerf*, I shall enumerate a few of its miraculous powers: it alleviated the pains of childbirth, cured diseases of the heart, procured a new supply of teeth in old age, and even enabled the possessor to discover stolen goods. It is ten thousand pities it has gone astray.

The period of gestation is said to be eight months and *some days;* I cannot ascertain how many. It reminds one of the answer so frequently given by some funny people in the far west: "How far is it from Cahirciveen, Pat? Six miles, and a *bit*, your honour." The *bit* may be six more. The mode of computation is simple, he gives the distance as far as he is acquainted with the road, and calls the remainder, be the same more or less, "a *bit.*"

CHAPTER III.

LE DAIM : THE FALLOW DEER.

LE DAIM MALE : THE BUCK.

LA DAINE : THE DOE.

Though the fallow deer are a distinct race, yet they bear considerable resemblance to the red deer, and are hunted in much the same manner, except that, as they are usually found in numerous herds, the *limier* is not employed in searching for them, and a few well trained dogs answer the purpose.

When the herd is roused, every effort is made to separate a suitable buck for the chase, and, as soon as that is effected, the hounds are uncoupled and laid

on the scent. The buck neither sets off at the same rapid pace, nor affords the same sport as the stag; but winds about his haunts, and tries by numerous shifts and artifices, to baffle the dogs, seldom relying upon any decisive effort to get clear of his enemies.

All hounds prefer the venison of the fallow deer to any other game; and, if they once taste it, will quit the stag to hunt the fallow deer, whenever they can.

Fallow deer are neither common nor much esteemed in France, where their venison is not so highly prized as with us. There are, however, some in the neighbourhood of Paris, and a few scattered through the provinces, chiefly where proprietors of large forests have introduced them for their own gratification: thus they are found in the forest of Cardrecieux, in the department of Sarthe, and the famous forest of Ardennes, extending along the Meuse, which contains one million twenty nine thousand square acres of land.

They are most pugnacious animals, and fight with unyielding obstinacy either for the doe or for favourite pastures. In their agrarian conflicts, they divide into different parties: the oldest buck in each heads his division, and leads them on to battle. They

never cease fighting until one party is vanquished and driven from the field of which the victorious herd retains possession. They have much antipathy to the red deer, and cannot be induced to herd with them.

These antipathies deserve some attention : They are too uniform to be deemed capricious or accidental : They are evidently fortifications erected by the hand of Providence, to preserve distinct races from intermixture and deterioration, and are always most insurmountable where the danger is most threatening: thus, these protective feuds are placed between the red and the fallow deer, the rabbit and the hare, the red and the gray partridge, the dog and the cat, and exist in a thousand instances which might be enumerated.

The botanist, in his researches, will also find the inflexible laws of nature rigidly protecting the different vegetable classes, and preserving their distinctive characters : thus it is that, when we attempt to counteract this harmonious arrangement, and succeed in producing hybrid plants, however beautiful they may be, however perfect they may appear, they are denied the power of ripening seed, and want that indestructibility which characterises the works of

nature, and distinguishes them from the contrivances of art.

The fallow deer are well known as domestic animals, and need scarcely be described here. They are, except perhaps in Spain, much smaller than the red deer, and also much shorter lived. They are found in America; but the received opinion is that they were introduced into America from Europe. The period of gestation is the same as that of the red deer, and, like them, they usually have a single fawn, and very rarely two.

A friend of mine, who possesses an extensive deer park, and is a thorough bred gnostic, gave me the following account of the mode, adopted by his keeper, to procure the finest fawns for his table: As soon as the fawn is dropped, the cruel keeper cuts its little feet in such a way, that the poor creature cannot stand upon them without inconvenience. The doe, finding it unable to move, redoubles her attention, nurses it with the greatest solicitude, and pampers it with milk until it grows into an unmixed lump of fat, without either lean or bone in it, and is, as my friend expresses it, exquisitely delicious.

I ventured to condemn the practice as cruel, at which he laughed immoderately, assuring me that

Mrs M... often expressed the same opinion; but was then so fond of fawn that she never even hinted at the cruelty, and rather encouraged the keeper in this heartless proceeding.

CHAPTER IV.

LE CHEVREUIL : THE ROE BUCK.
LA CHEVRETTE : THE DOE.

The roe buck is the most beautiful and the most graceful animal in Europe : he affords the most agreeable sport, and furnishes the most exquisite venison.

Like the fallow deer, he depends more upon his subtilty and cunning, than upon his almost incredible swiftness. At the outset he contrives to get well clear of his pursuers, and then commences a series of the most curious expedients to prevent his being again discovered by his enemies.

In searching for a roe buck, if the object be only to find out his haunt, and to provide a suitable buck for a future hunt, the huntsman takes his *limier* on the leash, and, with his aid, soon finds the chevreuil

lying in his snug form. Having thus found him, he rouses him, sees that he is fit for the purpose, and then immediately retires. The poor roe buck, considering all danger over, soon settles himself down again in the full confidence of enjoying his repose, little suspecting the very unfriendly nature of the visit, or that he is so unkindly selected for the chase.

But, if the object be immediate sport, as soon as the huntsman discovers the trail of the roe buck, the hounds are laid on the scent, and encouraged on in the ordinary way, until they start the game.

This, the norman sportsmen call hunting *à la bille-baude*: as soon as the roe buck is roused from his form, a cry is raised and as much noise made as possible: away he goes like a flash of lightning, leaving the best hounds far behind.

Once clear of his enemies, he doubles on his track, bounds from place to place in a zigzag, irregular course, and when he thinks his object sufficiently accomplished, he takes an immense bound into some well selected thicket, and crouches as close to the ground as possible. In this position he awaits the result, and is so confident of success, that he permits the whole party to come up without attempting to move from his hiding place. When again forced to

take flight, he tries some new device, or winds about his old haunts where his faithful doe remains, and finding him thus pressed, she comes at once to his rescue, and endeavours to draw off the hounds, at the risk of her own life!

In consequence of the great superiority of the venison, the roe buck is frequently shot. When this course is pursued, sportsmen hunt him with a few hounds, and post themselves at places where they conceive it likely that he may pass: or, they send a number of beaters into the cover, who walk leisurely through it, and start him from his form with as little noise as possible, when he generally comes out very quietly, and presents an easy shot.

In winter they employ deer shot; in summer, high duck shot is considered sufficient for the purpose.

It is not difficult to bring down the roe buck: if hit in the head, or shoulder, even at sixty yards, he generally tumbles. But, from the peculiarly light manner in which he bounds along, and the extreme rapidity of his movements when he is alarmed, the roe buck is considered a most difficult shot. If not killed at starting, he is certain to return to his haunt and is, therefore, often waylaid and assassinated upon his return.

None but professed poachers shoot the doe, and I need not tell you that they go on grab law and pay no attention to sporting regulations.

The poor roe buck is sometimes killed by the *braconniers à l'affût;* which is no more than ascertaining the track, or path, by which he goes to feed or to drink at particular hours, and waylaying and shooting him on his approach.

In this proceeding, extreme caution must be observed to make no noise, and to give him the wind as, otherwise, this sensitive creature discovers the assassin and escapes.

If he approaches the *chasseur* quietly and apparently without suspicion, he may be casily shot; but if, on the contrary, he suspects any danger, he passes like lightning, and the most expert shot can scarcely hit him.

There are two varieties of the roe buck in France; the red and the brown. The brown are considered to afford the best venison, and are in their prime at two years old.

Towards the end of the first year, the roe buck gets two little horns, and is called *brocard;* the third year he gets two antlers on each of his horns, one before, and the other behind, and the number increases

annually, until he has ten. They cast their horns about the end of autumn, and renew them during the winter. They require a large range, and never thrive when confined in small parks, where they uniformly pine away in a few years.

There is something peculiarly interesting in the domestic habits of these beautiful little animals. They are truly said to live *en famille*: They remain with their fawns, and never mix with strangers, even of their own race.

They live together on the border of a wood adjoining some cultivated ground, and are found in most of the forests and woods throughout Normandy and Britany, and in the Ardennes, where they are frequently hunted and afford excellent sport.

In winter they inhabit brushwood on the sides of

sloping hills, and live upon heath, rushes, broom, the husks of nuts, and the catkins of the willow and the hazel. In the spring they eat the young buds of trees. In summer they frequent young plantations, and rarely ever quit the shade, unless to procure water which they require at this season

In Normandy the *chevreuils* are found in the following forests : in the department of Orne ; in the forests of Andaine or Domfront, St-Clair, Alençon and Perche. In the department of Eure; in the forests of Monfort, Louviers, Bard, Longboël and Lyons, and in the department of Seine-Inférieure; in the forets of Rawy, Maulévriez, Brothonne, Trait-Verte, Roumare, Lalonde and Rouvray.

In Britany they are found in the following forests : in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine, in the forest of Fougères, Villecartier, Rennes, St.-Pierre, Chevré, Guerche, d'Arèze, Paimpont and Teillaye; and in the department of Loire-Inférieure, in the forests of Juigné, Vieux-Rault and Gavre.

They are also found in the department of Mayenne, in the forest of Mayenne; and the department of Sarthe, in the forests of Perseigne, Bonnétable, Montmirail, Vibraye, Condrecieux and Bercé.

BOAR HUNTING.

CHAPTER V.

LE SANGLIER : THE BOAR.

LA LAIE : THE SOW.

LE VIEUX SOLITAIRE : THE OLD BOAR.

Hunting the wild boar is both a laborious and dangerous amusement; and is not likely to suit the taste of those effeminate cockney sportsmen, who delight in new scarlet hunting frocks, flashy waistcoats, tight doeskins, brilliant top boots, twinkling spurs, and nice kid gloves, and who uniformly select the most circuitous way out of town, passing through a long train of fashionable squares, and populous thoroughfares *en route* for the field.

Boar hunters must be equipped in a very different

manner, unless they fancy being *chawed up* by the *vieux solitaire*, who would think no more of bolting a raw cockney sportsman, than some of our amiable and efficient friends, at the Mansion-house, do of swallowing a fresh Colchester oyster, or a ladle full of mullygatawny soup.

Of all the beasts of the chase, in France, the *vieux solitaire* is the most savage and perilous to encounter. His strength and ferocity are perfectly astonishing; he is armed with tusks which protrude several inches, and are as sharp as any knife-grinder could make them.

An American lady, of high rank, informs us that she had her face cut in a deplorable manner from merely looking at them.*

The boar hunter, however, is fully prepared to deal with his savage antagonist: he is armed with a gun, or *carabine* furnished with a spring bayonet, and loaded with ball or slugs, and a peculiarly constructed *couteau de chasse* with which he can cut, or stab as occasion may require.

Where large hunting establishments are kept, the

* Grabina Polk, the inventress of the polka dance, called in America *a polk*, in France *Polka*. *Essays on boar hunting in the Rocky mountains;* by Grabina Polk, p. 65.

limier is employed, as in stag hunting, in tracing out the *vieux solitaire;* and the *valets de limier* and *piqueurs* can, without much difficulty, distinguish his tracks from those of the sow, or young boars, they are also well acquainted with his habits.

In the winter months, he frequents the densest parts of the forest; and, in the summer months, enjoys himself, wallowing in some swampy locality, from whence he proceeds, in the dusk of the evening, to ravage the surrounding country where he commits the most frightful depredations, especially in vineyards and warrens.

It is wonderful with what facility he roots out the poor rabbits, and devours them, *fur and all;* he requires no piquant sauce to stimulate his voracious appetite: he patronises no such nonsense.*

After his foraging excursion, he returns to his

* Formerly pigs were prosecuted for their crimes, tried, judged and executed according to law. *Le 2 juin 1446, le bourreau d'Ipres pendit à Bailleul, en Flandre, un pourceau atteint et convaincu d'avoir murdry, et, en partie, mangé l'enfant de Mathieu Cup, demeurant en la paroiche de Meteren, dessoubs la jurisdiction du diz Bailleul.*

Archives historiques et littéraires du nord et du midi de la Belgique; par MM. Aimé Leroy et Arthur Dinaux, t. 1, p. 84.

haunt and settles himself for the day. On entering the forest he adopts a curious precaution to baffle his enemies: when he has proceeded a short distance, he returns on his own track, and enters in another place, and again returns in like manner, and repeats this manœuvre several times before he proceeds to his haunt.

The *valet de limier*, however, is aware of all his schemes, and soon discovers the right trail.

When a boar has been frequently hunted, he becomes exceedingly wary, quits his lair at the approach of the hounds and flies with considerable rapidity: but his scent is so rank, the dogs have no difficulty in picking it up, and soon overtake him.

He, however, sometimes shows more pluck, awaits the arrival of his assailants, wages immediate war with them, and commits dreadful havoc amongst the dogs.

In these cases, the main object is to compel him to fly, which fatigues him and reduces his strength: for this purpose, the hunters assail him in the most uproarious manner, and make the forest ring with shouts and yells, and gun shots, and the most unearthly noises imaginable. When they succeed in this manœuvre, he stoops his head and bolts off with the

utmost violence, never deviating from a direct line, unless when coerced by some perfectly insurmountable obstruction: Thus, he rushes on, like a steam engine, bearing down everything before him.

He, sometimes, bursts forth from a dense part of the forest, quite unexpectedly; and, if a horseman happens then to be in the line of his motion, and is unable to get out of his course with sufficient quickness, the infuriated animal seldom fails to inflict some dreadful wounds upon the poor horse with his sharp tusks.

This is one of the principal dangers in boar hunting: when the boar begins to flag and feels fatigued by the chase, he selects some strong position, gets his back to a rock or to a tree, and prepares to receive his enemies on his well polished tusks. If the hunters are far behind, and he has sufficient time, he generally strews the battle field with the killed and wounded; but the hunters soon come up, and send their bullets and slugs whistling into his brawny carcass: They, however, produce but little effect, unless he is hit in the loin or shoulder, or in the flank, which presents but a small vulnerable part, and which it requires a dexterous hand to hit.

Some also endeavour to get a stab at him in the

rear, while he is thus busily engaged in front with his numerous and noisy assailants. He will sometimes, when thus worried, bolt off a second, and even a third time; and no human power can resist him in his progress. On these occasions, if he makes a direct charge at any of the party, which he will scarcely ever do, except in the rutting season, when he is perfectly furious, or to retaliate a sore blow, or when injudiciously obstructed by a single hunter, the assailed party must elude, and not attempt to resist, him; he should step aside, get out of the line of his motion from which he cannot swerve, and try to stab him as he passes.

An expert hand may sometimes deal him a death blow *en passant;* if not, away he goes for another start which terminates in a similar fight, or in his receiving a mortal wound from some well aimed shot; and when the infuriated *solitaire* is thus rolled over, he generally still retains quite strength enough to do much mischief in his last struggles, if incautiously approached by either dogs or men. Care is therefore taken to despatch him as expeditiously as possible, and to keep the dogs from him until all is made safe.

Those who hunt the *vieux solitaire* in a less formal

manner, and with a less expensive equipage, employ a few couple of the strongest dogs they can procure; (bull dogs are much esteemed for the purpose), and search for him where they conceive they are most likely to find him in the forest, taking especial care to keep with the dogs to prevent a disadvantageous conflict with him, when he is first discovered. Some of the party generally post themselves in places where it is supposed he may pass, in order to obtain a fair shot at him *en route*.

As the remainder of the proceedings differ little from those I have already described, they need not be further noticed.

When the *vieux solitaire* is despatched, the hunters draw his blood, and allow the dogs to enjoy the spoil; but they seldom eat any of his flesh, and should never be encouraged to do so, as it is apt to sicken them.

In the year 1829, there was a boar killed in the forest of Camillon, near Bourbonne-les-bains, in the department of Marne, that had ravaged the country for some years: he had destroyed several packs of hounds in the fruitless chase, and fought innumerable bloody battles. He weighed 485 pounds, and had above 30 balls lodged in his body when he fell.

Boars are found in most of the large forests throughout France; particularly in the Southern and Western departments, and are much hunted in Normandy and Britany.

They abound in the forests of Andaine or Domfront, Alençon, Bellesme and Perche, in the department of Orne; in the forests of Paimpont and de la Guerche, in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine; in the forest of Mayenne or Chailland, in the department of Mayenne; in the forests of Perseigne and Bonnetable, in the department of Sarthe, and in the famous forest of the Ardennes, in the department of Ardennes.

They are by no means sedentary animals: they migrate in large herds, in autumn and winter, in search of places more suitable to their taste, and nothing can impede their progress on those migratory journeys. They swim across rivers, clamber over ice and burst through all sorts of inclosures with the utmost facility, never turning out of their course in search of an easier passage; but forcing on through all obstructions until they attain their object. They

also very frequently change from one forest to another, especially in the rutting season.

The boar, like the stag, acquires different names according to his age: until he is six months old, he is called *marcassin;* from thence until he is a year old, he is called *bête rousse.* When a year old, he appears to be considered introduceble into society, for he is then, and from thence until he is three years old, called *bête de compagnie.* At three years old, he is named *tiers an;* at four years old, *quart an,* after which he becomes *vieux sanglier, grand vieux sanglier,* and finally, *un solitaire.*

He takes four or five years to attain his full growth, and lives about thirty years. The sow commences breeding at one year old. The rutting season is in january and february; and the sow only breeds once a year. She generally has from six to ten, and seldom more, at a litter. She suckles them for three or four months; but superintends and guides them through the forest, until they are quite strong enough to take care of themselves.

Le maréchal de Vauban wrote a treatise on these animals, which he facetiously called his *cochonnerie.* His calculation is that the posterity of a single sow might, in eleven years, amount to the enormous number of 434,835!

The Romans had two remarkable methods of dressing the wild boar : in both cases they were served up entire.

One consisted in roasting one side and boiling the other, so that each guest might indulge his peculiar fancy. The other was most singular, and consisted in roasting the entire and stuffing it with the greatest variety of game and fish.

The french imitation of this dish appears better worth the consideration of our respected gastronomists at the Mansion-house.

In the year 1718, the profuse and tasteful Duchesse de Berry gave a grand entertainment to la Duchesse de Lorraine, at the palais du Luxembourg, at which an ox was served entire, stuffed from the tail to the horns, with all sorts of fowl... What a splendid sight it would be at a lord Mayor's feast!

The head of the boar is considered the ne plus ultra of piggishness : it is generally served up cold with a lemon in its mouth : You will meet with it up the Rhine served in that fashion.

The following song gives the best possible directions for preparing and cooking it; and is a curious production :

AIR : *Elle m'appelle médisant.*

D'une hure de sanglier
Brûlez la soie en son entier :
Désossez-en bien le museau
Et même lavez-le dans l'eau.

Coupez des tranches de jambon,
Et du lard qui soit gras et bon,
Dont vous larderez proprement
Cette hure, dans le moment.

Mettez du sel abondamment,
Des blancs oignons, du poivre blanc,
Herbes fines, cannelle, cloux,
Et coriande de bon goût.

Rangez le tout dans un vaisseau
Avec raisonnablement d'eau ;
Mais, dans un linge blanc, serrez
La hure quand vous l'y mettrez.

Il faut huit pintes de bon vin
Pour la bien faire cuire à point :
De bonne eau-de-vie, un flacon,
Tout ensemble dans le chaudron.

Après huit heures de cuisson,
Que tout le jour, dans son bouillon,
On le laisse bien refroidir :
Puis à sec, il faut la servir.

Festin joyeux, par LEBAS ; Paris 1738, page 70.

WOLF HUNTING.

CHAPTER VI.

LE LOUP : THE WOLF.
LA LOUVE : THE SHE WOLF.

No beast of the chase is more universally detested than the wolf : his endless depredations in the wolf districts throughout France, would appear fabulous to those who are unacquainted with such matters. M. Le Masson assures us that the annual pecuniary losses occasioned by a few wolves, in a small district in the department of Manche, exceed 20,000 francs! and he justly complains that those salutary laws, formerly enacted to promote their destruction, have been most injudiciously relaxed, and the public rewards, offered for killing them, reduced to mere nominal

sums which afford no remuneration for so laborious and so difficult an undertaking.

Thus, in the year 1814, the *louvetiers** were allowed the privilege of hunting wolves, twice a month, in all forests rented by sportsmen from the state; which privilege has, by an ordinance of the 24th july 1832, been wholly withdrawn.

The rewards too, which were heretofore considerable, namely: for killing a wolf, 200 francs; for a she-wolf, with young, 300 francs; for a she-wolf, not with young, 250 francs, and for a young wolf, 20 francs, are now for killing a wolf, 12 francs; for a she-wolf, with young, 18 francs; for a she-wolf, not with young, 15 francs, and for a young wolf only 6 francs. Nor has this reduction been made in consequence of any supposed diminution in the number of these noxious animals, or of any falling off in the depredations, for, on the contrary, it is an admitted fact that they are much on the increase in France.

The principal difficulty wolf hunters have to encounter is that of forcing the wolf to quit the cover,

* *Louvetiers* are public officers appointed in the wolf districts to superintend and encourage the destruction of wolves, etc.

which cannot be effected without a powerful and well appointed pack of hounds; from 50 to 60 couple are not considered more than sufficient for the purpose. Such establishments are too expensive to be very numerous in any country, but there are nevertheless several such packs kept expressly for wolf hunting in Normandy and Britany, and also in various departments throughout France.

In wolf hunting, they enter the forest as quietly as possible, and thus endeavour to get near the wolf before he starts, which is a matter of considerable difficulty, as he is always on the alert, and has so quick a perception of their approach that he generally steals off before they come up with him. If the forest is large and sufficiently dense to afford him protection, he can seldom be forced to quit it: he then twists and doubles through all its intricacies with which he is thoroughly acquainted, and exerts all his subtlety to baffle his enemies. The hunters have no remedy but to press on the hounds, and thus endeavour to overpower him and compel him to bolt, or to hunt him down in the forest: but if he is found in a less extensive forest, or one which does not afford him sufficient scope to play off his cunning dodges, he saves them all trouble on that score,

at once decides on starting for some distant forest, perhaps some 15 or 20 miles off, where he knows he will find ample protection, and dashes away like lightning; they then come in for a splendid run, so graphically described by lord Byron, as:

> The wolf's long gallop which can tire
> The hounds deep hate, and hunters fire.

Where large packs of hounds are not kept for wolf hunting, a different method is pursued, and the party consists both of hunting and shooting sportsmen:* the former take whatever hounds they can command and hunt him in the usual way; while the latter form themselves into a sort of rifle brigade, and take up positions in the forest where they think he is likely to run, in expectation of obtaining a shot at him *en passant*.

They are obliged to observe the strictest silence, and to conceal themselves with the utmost caution, for the wolf, who is peculiarly quick sighted, proceeds

* In Britany they have an excellent mode of sustaining suitable packs of hounds for boar and wolf hunting, each sportsman keeps a few couple, and when all are united they form a powerful pack.

with great circumspection, and carefully examines every object before him.

When the wolf is either run down, or severely wounded, every exertion is made to prevent the dogs from incautiously closing upon him, as there is no end to the slaughter he sometimes makes amongst them, on these occasions. He is, therefore, usually finished up with a *coup de fusil* to save the dogs from the fatal consequences of a fight with him.

The powerful strength and decided superiority of the wolf over the best dogs is worthy of notice; and has been fully established by various experiments. Louis 13th procured an old wolf, and let some of his strongest dogs at him by three at a time: he soon despatched twelve of them without much trouble to himself, and without sustaining any serious injury in the conflict. The noise he made, in snapping his teeth, was considered to resemble that which the french carters make when cracking their whips. What a nice pair of nut crackers he must have!

On the 2d may 1839 a prodigious wolf was found in the forest of Mortain, in the department of Manche, and, after being hunted for upwards of four hours by le comte de Bonvouloir's celebrated hounds, he was fired at by Mr Bonnesœur (an intrepid wolf hunter in

that part of the country), who tumbled him on the spot: he rolled over, uttering a piercing and terrific yell, scrambled again upon his legs and gave another hour's good running, after which, being closely pressed, he betook himself to a cavity in a rock, but not before he had severely injured several of the dogs. He was finally shot by one of the *piqueurs*.*

Hounds very seldom touch a dead wolf: nevertheless Mr Gandon of Rennes is said to have had some dogs, in his famous pack, less squeamish in their taste, that condescended to feed upon his loathsome carcass. What dainty creatures they must have been!

When it is ascertained that a wolf is lurking in a particular locality, the *louvetier* of the district assembles as many *chasseurs* as possible; and, assuming the command of the party, proceeds to the cover, stations his *chasseurs* in the best positions he can select, and then enters the wood with a few beaters.

As soon as the wolf perceives them advancing, he endeavours to steal off unobserved, finds all the passes guarded, and meets with a warm reception from his concealed enemies. They generally aim at his shoulder, but if there is any bungling, and

* *Nouvelle vénerie normande*, p. 255.

he returns into the wood, it is quite hopeless to think of forcing him out a second time. It would be easier to hunt a rabbit out of an acre of furze, (which is no easy matter, I can assure you), than to compel him to break cover again: he must then be dealt with in some other manner, and the difficulty of getting at him, is considerably increased.

The most effectual method of destroying these detestable animals, when a neighbourhood is infested with them, is the general wolf battue: it is called *traque* in many parts of the country, from the word *traqueur*; the synonyme of our word *beater*. This wolf battue is conducted by the *louvetier* of the district, and is a very formidable and curious proceeding. He assembles several hundred persons armed with guns, staves, pitchforks, swords and all manner of destructive weapons; and, after disposing a long train of shooters and placing them so that nothing can escape without coming under their fire; he then forms his *traqueurs* into lines, placing them sufficiently near to each other to preclude the possibility of any wolves passing between them. When they are thus arranged, he gives the signal, and they immediately commence striking the trees and bushes with their sticks and pitchforks, firing off guns and

pistols, blowing horns, beating drums, and making all manner of hideous noises, advancing at the same time in a slow and regular manner, so that nothing can get through their line, and thus driving all before them. The wolves thus frightened by the din of war, lay aside their repugnance to the open country, and break cover in all directions. The slaughter then commences, and they are shot while endeavouring to make their escape.

When wolves are not sufficiently numerous to demand such tumultuous proceedings; or when the forests are too extensive for the adoption of the battue system, various contrivances are set on foot to entrap them. Of these, the *tour à loup* which is considered very destructive, is worthy of notice: it is constructed as follows: some convenient spot is selected in the vicinity of a farm house, or in some locality where they are in the habit of committing nocturnal depredations: a circle is described, of from 8 to 10 feet in diameter; good strong stakes of, at least, 10 feet in length, are then procured; they are pointed at one end and driven firmly into the ground in the circumference of the circle, at a distance of 5 inches apart from each other, leaving one open space of 18 inches only for an entrance.

A second circle is then described with the same centre, so that its circumference may lie within 16 inches of the outer circle. Similar stakes are then firmly driven down in the circumference of the inner circle, at a like distance from each other, and without leaving any aperture for an entrance: the circular path lying between the two rows of stakes is well trodden down to represent a beaten path: the door, which should be made of good strong timber, is then hung on easy iron hinges, and so contrived that when shut *from the inside*, it will remain fast, by means of a latch falling into its proper place. A goose, or a sheep, is then placed in the central space, from whence it cannot escape, and the door, (which opens inwards), is left open, and stops up the passage on one side.*

The wolf, attracted by the animal within, approaches with his usual caution; and, at length, seeing the door open, and the beaten path before him, enters. Once in, he cannot turn in the narrow path, and goes round until he comes behind the door which he pushes on and closes upon himself. He is

* For a description of the *tour à loup*, very fully given, see *Encyclopédie-Roret*, title chasseur, p. 61.

then in close custody, to the no small gratification of the farmer and his goose, and soon pays for all his crimes.

The wolves in Britany frequently attack the cattle in the fields, and the method they adopt of defending themselves is most curious. As soon as they perceive the wolves approaching, they form themselves into a circle, collect all the young cattle in the centre, and receive the wolves upon their horns: when they have time to effect this manœuvre, they are impregnable, they sometimes pursue the wolves and hunt them to considerable distances, and, on those occasions, no fences can impede their progress; they become quite infuriated and tear down or burst through every thing that comes in their way.

Wolves abound in the following forests in Normandy; namely, in the forest of Mortain, in the department of the Manche; in the forest of St-Sever; in the department of Calvados, and in the forests of Andaine or Domfront, Alençon, Mesnil-Broult, Bellesme and Perche in the department of Orne, and also in the following forests in Britany, namely: in the forests of Fougères, Villecartier, Rennes and Paimpont, in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine, and in the forest of Juigné, in the department of Loire-

Inférieure; also in the forest of Mayenne, in the department of Mayenne, and in the forest of Perseigne, in the department of Sarthe, and in numerous other forests throughout France.

The wolf in some respects resembles the dog: his head, however, is strikingly different; he has a peculiarly sinister cast of countenance; his eyes are sparkling and very luminous at night; his snout is long and blunt, his ears short and erect, his tail straight, thick and covered with long hair. Buffon gives a very unflattering account of him.*

They are found all over Europe and also throughout America, and there are many varieties of them. The french wolf seldom exceeds 33 inches in height, or weighs more than 100 pounds. The colour of the body is, in general, a mixture of fawn colour gray and white. But there are two sorts of black wolves in lower Normandy; one with shaggy hair,

*..... Désagréable en tout : la mine basse, l'odeur insupportable, le naturel pervers, les mœurs féroces : il est odieux, nuisible de son vivant, inutile après sa mort.

the other quite smooth, (like a greyhound). They have both been found in the forests of Alençon and St.-Sever already mentioned.

Wolves are both intractable and treacherous. Buffon states that he reared two, and that after being apparently quite reconciled to all around them and perfectly inoffensive for two years, one of them suddenly broke from his chain, turned upon the fowl, killed them all, took flight, and escaped. The other, in like manner got loose, turned upon a dog with which he was reared, killed him and made his escape.

M. le Masson tells us that he got a cub only 15 days old, that he reared him on dry bread and *soupe maigre*, that he had him for two years; that he hunted with the dogs and barked and imitated them in giving tongue, and never showed the least disposition to do any mischief.

Perhaps M. Le Masson may, in the next edition of his very interesting and useful work, give us some further account of his conduct : it affords such convincing proof of the reclamatory influence of *soupe maigre* that we may expect to see it prescribed along with the *pain sec* for all refractory boys in the french colleges

The young cub while under 6 months old, is called *louveteau;* at six months old, he takes the name of *louvart;* at one year old he becomes *jeune loup;* at three years old, *vieux loup*, and after four years old, *grand vieux loup:* he takes two years to attain his full growth, and lives from 15 to 20 years. The female does not breed until she is two years old, and is not above 15 days in heat. The oldest commence in july, the others in february and march. The period of gestation is three months and a half, and they usually have from 3 to 9 cubs.

The wolf searches out som old badger's nest in the neighbourhood of water, makes it sufficiently large for her accommodation, collects moss and dried grass for a bed, establishes herself at the entrance of it, and there suckles her cubs for some weeks. If she is alarmed for their safety, she, at once, removes them to a considerable distance where she has a place already prepared for their reception in anticipation of being compelled to remove them: this is a curious arrangement, and shows great forethought and sagacity in these animals.

The wolf is subject to madness, and then becomes a dreadful scourge on the country; there was an instance of this some years since in Normandy; the

animal ravaged the whole country, carrying death and desolation every where it went.

It is confidently asserted that the wolf can communicate this terrific disease, when in a high state of excitement, without being itself diseased; and some very striking instances are given in support of this strange theory, but it cannot be considered as established, and may well be doubted.

When wolves once taste human flesh they become perfectly ferocious and will ever afterwards attack a man when they meet him alone. They pass by the flock and fly at the shepherd. The italian wolves are remarkably fond of asses. It is strange that they do not rise *en masse* and possess themselves of the town of Bologna, it being a well known fact that the much esteemed bologna sausages are all made of that patient and very ill treated animal.

FOX HUNTING.

CHAPTER VII.

LE RENARD : THE FOX.

LA RENARDE : THE BITCH-FOX.

Fox hunting, which is the favourite amusement of the british sportsman, and upon which such extravagant sums of money are annually expended in England, is by no means in such high estimation in France where the fox is treated rather as vermin than as game, and is seldom hunted in a sportsman-like manner.

The preliminary arrangements for a fox hunt are every where alike : all the earths in the neighbourhood must be closed or secured the night before.

This is not so laborious a task as some uninitiated persons may suppose. The fox is proverbially timid and suspicious, and the slightest alteration in the appearance of its entrance will scare him from his earth: he at once decides that there is some trick on foot, some trap laid for him, and sneaks off in some other direction : thus, a piece of pasteboard in a cleft stick, fastened at the entrance of a fox earth, will be found as effectual as building it up with brick and mortar.

When the fox returns from his foraging excursion with, perhaps a fat goose slung over his shoulder, and finds he cannot with safety enter his earth, he retires into some thicket, or into some dense part of the forest, where he remains until his inveterate enemies arrive and force him from his retreat.

If the cover is small, he, at once, sets off at a round pace for some extensive forest, or for some distant earth, and soon gets clear of the hounds : in such cases they come in for a noble chase, and only want a suitable country and some sporting fences to give them a taste of what we call fox hunting. If, on the contrary, the fox is found in a large forest, he seldom quits it; but winds and doubles through its thickest and most inaccessible localities, and would

baffle the best pack of dogs in the universe, if the game were fairly left between them; but that is never done, for these hunts are attended by a numerous band of *amateurs chasseurs* who exercise their utmost skill and ingenuity in waylaying the poor hunted fox. They are generally clad in some dark dress, conceal themselves, where they conceive the fox is likely to run, and try to shoot him *en passant*, and he is thus assassinated while the hounds are pursuing him in full cry. They would not perhaps give themselves so much trouble about an animal not even fit for soup, but that he sometimes runs away with the *roti* which is undoubtedly a very grave offence.

When a fox is closely pressed by the hounds, he makes various shifts to extricate himself: he sometimes runs up a tree, and watches his enemies from the ivy-clad ramifications of some ancient oak, or runs into a warren, selects the largest burrow he can find and squeezes himself into it for protection. But when driven to the last extremity, he gets into a crack in a rock, or under the root of a tree, and there gives battle to the hounds as they approach. Few ever venture to lay hold of him in such a position, and woe to the hunter who attempts to touch him! No-

thing can exceed the sharpness of his teeth or his dexterity in using them.

He is generally knocked on the head, and flung among the dogs.

Nor do foxes always wait to be hunted and hard pressed to adopt measures for their security. I knew an instance of a fox that baffled all the efforts of his neighbours, whose turkeys, geese and fowl he pillaged by the dozen, for the greater part of a hunting season: he was known to frequent a particular cover of no very considerable extent, consisting of some 20 or 30 acres of young plantations in a gentleman's demesne: he was often traced into it, the hounds sent for, the cover carefully drawn, his run found and acknowledged by the hounds, and no further account obtained of his movements, no more than if the earth had opened and swallowed him up. The huntsman, at length pronounced it useless to draw the cover for him, which was sad news for the owner of the turkeys and geese which were, nevertheless, disappearing as usual. At last the gentleman's gardener, one evening, met the fox where he did not consider he had permission to be, namely in his grapery, which stood in a garden surrounded by a wall full 12 feet high!

Away dashed *Monsieur Renard*: he ascended the

wall through the branches of an old pear-tree, ran along the wall for a considerable distance, and descended through some ivy on the other side.

The circumstance was immediately reported to the owner of the baffled pack: he, at once, saw how matters stood, came the following morning, drew the cover with the same result as usual, then sent a couple of dogs into the garden, found the gentleman in the flue of the grapery, and killed him after a severe run, much to the gratification of those who were so often disappointed in searching for him, and with the full approbation of every turkey and goose in the neighbourhood.

The owner of the above mentioned pack of hounds once lost a very valuable gold watch in a severe chase, and desired his huntsman to proclaim the circumstance in returning home, and to offer a reward of two guineas to any poor person who might find it. His groom, in the course of the evening, brought him his watch which he was, of course, much delighted to see and to find perfectly uninjured by the fall. He took out his pocket-book and, handing him a couple of guineas, told him to take good care of the fellow, and to give him the reward he so well deserved.

" What fellow your honour ?

— Why, the fellow who brought the watch !

— Nobody brought the watch, your honour.

— Then where did you get it, John ?

— I picked it out of Patrick's hoof, your honour, he's the most carefulest horse I ever knowd! "

When a fox is taken alive, it is a common trick of his to feign being dead, in which state he will allow a dog to pull him about, without betraying the least symptom of life, until a favourable opportunity arises for making his escape, when he is up and away in an instant, and when he falls into inexperienced hands he generally succeeds and effects his escape by this stratagem.

Foxes are found, in all the forests throughout France, in the greatest abundance, and are scattered through the whole country; so that it is quite unnecessary to

give any further local information concerning them.

The natural life of the fox is estimated at 14 years, and he is two years coming to his full growth. They breed at one year old, and only once a year, (which is generally considered quite often enough). The period of gestation is 50 days, and they have from 3 to 6 cubs at a time.

Most of the french foxes are red; but some of them are nearly black: these, they call by the very appropriate name of *charbonniers*. They are not a distinct race, but merely a variety, and are common in Britany, Normandy and Burgundy, and also in other parts of France.

In more northern countries, foxes are found of various shades and colours; white, black, gray, and we are told of a curious variety of the white fox, having black heads, and fawn coloured feet.

If a fox cannot procure game or fowl, he is not very fastidious; he will eat fruit, honey, moles, frogs or fish. The bitch-fox comes in heat in winter, and has her cubs in april or may.

The fox has, as Buffon tells us, various tones of voice which he employs according to circumstances;*

*....Il a la voix de la chasse, l'accent du désir, le son du

and it is singular that we have not yet heard of a singing fox; but perhaps we soon shall, and I throw out the hint, to encourage the experiment.

Mr Le Masson assures us that he once had a very old fox prepared and dressed *en civet*, for some parisian sportsmen who were very fond of venison, and that they took it for *chevreuil de Compiègne*. They must have been persons of exquisite taste and discernment!

murmure, le ton plaintif de la tristesse, le cri de la douleur qu'il ne fait entendre qu'au moment où il reçoit un coup de feu qui lui casse quelque membre.

BUFFON.

HARE HUNTING.

CHAPTER VIII.

LE LIÈVRE : THE HARE.

LE BOUQUIN : THE BUCK.

LA HASE : THE DOE.

Hare hunting in France is chiefly confined to the forests and large woods which are usually rented by gentlemen for sporting purposes. Many of these forests are, as the French say : *bien percées;* that is, intersected by alleys of sufficient width to allow horsemen to gallop through them without obstruction.

The hounds are introduced into the cover, and, as there is no lack of game, soon have numerous hares on foot, divide into distinct packs and often run in opposite directions.

The sportsmen too who take guns with them on these hunting excursions form different parties, some on foot, others on horseback, and the slaughter, (the criterion by which they estimate the sport), is usually very considerable.

This mixture of hunting and shooting is the only thing in the shape of hunting to be met with in the north of France, and is generally conducted on foot.

The french sportsmen have no fixed days for this amusement; they are more whimsical, and perhaps more judicious in their arrangements. When the weather is suitable, and other circumstances favourable, they decide upon an excursion to the forest, organize a hunting party, and set off without further ceremony. This they can easily accomplish as they all reside within the fortifications of some small town; but our sportsmen, who are scattered over a wide extent of country and who could not be assembled upon any other principle but that of preconcerted meetings, must go on hunting on mondays wednesdays and fridays be the same wet or dry, good, bad or indifferent. The french system is certainly preferable, but quite impracticable in England.

Those who wish to see some of this forest hunting on a small scale, may indulge their curiosity in the

immediate vicinity of St-Omer, where Mr Fiolet keeps a few couple of very passable hounds, and occasionally hunts in the picturesque woods of Clairmarais which he rents for the purpose. It is sometimes exceedingly interesting, at least to a sportsman, to hear their harmonious cry running through the thousand echoes of these wooded hills.

I have frequently enjoyed it while fishing in the adjoining waters.

The vast number of hares in these woods is perfectly astonishing.

A friend of mine, much in the habit of shooting in the *commune d'Arques*, assured me that, one morning, in the course of his progress through it, he counted no less than seventeen hares, stealing into the cover.

There is, however, in Normandy, a much better

description of hare hunting, where several fine packs of hounds are kept, for the express purpose. The norman hunting is more in accordance with english taste, is well and skilfully conducted; and, in many respects, little inferior to our own: * but those who have been accustomed to the dashing style and matchless speed of our fine harriers, and to seeing our noble horses and their intrepid riders sweeping over a well fenced country, without a moment's pause, clearing gates, walls and hedges, plunging into and swimming canals and rivers; and, I suppose, we may now add, flying over rail roads, need never expect to find any thing out of great Britain to compete with an english hunt.

The french sportsman, however, is content with his less perilous recreation: he has none of those dangerous leaps, requires no great horsemanship, and enjoys his sport after his own fashion, without incurring any of these risks which an englishman has

* In our country the hounds are permitted to eat the hare; and it is perfectly astonishing how quickly it disappears. The french sportsmen act more wisely: they give the *ears* to the hounds, and keep the rest for themselves. Directions are technically given for this curious proceeding in the *Manuel du chasseur*, page 84.

the courage to encounter, and either the dexterity or the good luck to escape from, every day he hunts.

The french harriers are small and carefully bred, and are considered the best dogs for hunting the roe buck which very much resembles the hare, as well in his style of running, as in his numerous shifts and devices during the chase.

The French are fond of coursing, and have excellent greyhounds: * They course in the open country, and generally on foot, by which means they get through the tillage ground without difficulty: they employ spaniels to seek for and start the game, and slip the greyhounds at the hare when started. Their spaniels are trained to set hares, which indeed is part of the education of all sporting dogs in France, as will be seen when we come to treat of shooting.

This timid animal, with all its apparent simplicity, often evinces extraordinary tact, in escaping from its numerous enemies: and what animal has more!

The poor hare scarcely ever quits its form without an unfriendly shout, or having a stick or a stone flung after it. No wonder it should lie all day trem-

* Under the existing laws of France, it is not allowed to employ greyhounds in hare hunting, though it is occasionally done.

bling in its form, and only venture out at night to seek for food and stretch its crippled limbs.

> Where shall the trembling hare a shelter find?
> Hark! death advances in each gust of wind!
> Now stratagems and doubling wiles she tries;
> Now circling turns and now at large she flies,
> Till spent at last she pants and heaves for breath,
> Then lays her down and waits devouring death.
>
> GAY'S RURAL SPORTS.

But if the hare has numerous enemies, it has always had the protection of powerful friends. The number of laws and ordinances made in all countries for the preservation of hares is quite astonishing, amongst which we may fairly number the present heavy tax on greyhounds. In Belgium the tax on other dogs is only 5 francs, while that on greyhounds is 35 francs.

If king Léopold would consult the hares or take my advice, he would double the amount of that salutary tax.

It is certainly worthy of observation that the hare, before it has ever been hunted, knows that it leaves something in its footsteps, which betrays its course; and that all its clever shifts and devices to elude its

enemies appear to be built upon that knowledge. Does not this afford a triumphant answer to the curious doctrine of Descartes who denies that such animals have any reasoning power, and considers them as mere machines. Let us examine some of the contrivances by which they foil their pursuers, and then decide what sort of machines they are.

All sportsmen, acquainted with hare hunting, know that they sometimes quit their forms, and swim into islands, in ponds and rivers, on the approach of hounds, and remain there until all danger is over; that when hunted, they sometimes run into the form of a fresh hare, force it out, then return some distance on the old track, leap from it into a thicket or cluster of weeds, and remain there until the hounds are on the fresh hare; that they frequently run in amongst sheep, and along dusty roads, and get upon stone walls, and run considerable distances along them, and swim several times backwards and forwards across rivers, and then squat themselves in a tuft of rushes or sedge approaching it from the water, all to baffle the dogs, and to break off the scent.

They are also known to approach their forms by several successive zigzag leaps, which those who have traced them in snow, must have frequently observed:

In fact, when they lose the track, they consider that the hare is not far off, and are seldom much out in the calculation.

I have known a hare conceal itself in a snipe haunt by getting off the tuft upon which it lay, and sinking itself down to its very nose in the water.

We also know that, by similar stratagems successfully employed, the hare has drawn upon itself the *triste* imputation of witchcraft: It could spring from no other source, and the charge has been too general throughout Europe to ascribe it to the ignorance or superstition of any particular sect or people. In Germany they relate endless stories of enchanted hares, that no dog could run down, or no sportsman kill. The small tracks made by hares, through the wheat, are there denominated *hexen steige* "the witches' paths. In France it is not uncommon to hear of a hare inhabiting a particular locality which nobody cares to fire at, conceiving it bewitched; and, in my own sweet country, I knew an instance of a hare that afforded a celebrated pack of hounds several extraordinary runs, and always escaped. The hare was half white, and usually found in the neighbourhood of an old abbey. Of course the common people said it was a witch, and considered it most improper to hunt it.

There is a funny story told by the author of an old work on hunting and shooting, namely: that he had the imprudence to go out coursing on S^{t} Hubert's day without hearing mass; that he met a hare that played off a great variety of tricks on the dogs, and seemed to be an overmatch for them; and, at length, when they came up, showed them a pair of horns, saying: *N'est-ce pas bien courir pour un petit bon homme?* and disappeared. How credulous people must have been in those days!

It however abundantly appears that the hare has ever had a high reputation for extricating itself from difficulties, and, as it appears to me, much claim to be allowed the privilege of thinking, and sufficient capacity to manage its own affairs.

The hare is a short lived animal: they scarcely ever live more than eight or nine years, and are full grown at one year old.

The period of gestation is thirty one days, and the doe generally has two young ones, and, occasionally, three or four. It is very curious that if a hare has more than one, they each have a white star on the forehead which they retain for a considerable time; but if she has but one it has no star. This is well ascertained, and is a curious fact. She suckles

them for about three weeks, and then leaves them in the best and safest place she can find to take care of themselves. The breeding season is from march to september. The bucks fight dreadfully for the does, and sometimes are killed in the conflict.

Hares prefer those plants that have milky leaves, and are very fond of parsley. Those who wish to encourage them, cannot adopt a more effectual mode than sowing parsley with their clover and grass seeds when laying down land for permanent pasture. The parsley remains a long time in the land, and is considered wholesome food for sheep.

A hare may be eaten quite fresh; but if not, it must be kept for some days before it is again fit for use. There can be no better mode of dressing a good hare than roasting it in its skin, and no better sauce for it than currant jelly. But, if you have an old buck as tough as a pair of leather breeches, the following receipt, canonized by the adoption of Louis 13th, will make him as tender as a sucking chicken.

RECEIPT.

Put your hare on the spit with both skin and fur on: when the fur is well dried, singe it off; then make two shovels red hot, and, taking them alterna-

tely, put some lard on them, and allow it to drop on the hare while it turns before the fire; and continue doing so until you can easily pick off the skin, (without burning your fingers), then continue to baste it with melted lard, and, afterwards with vinegar, and serve it hot with whatever sauce you prefer.

The following song gives excellent directions for dressing a hare.

LIÈVRE A LA SUISSE.

AIR : *Je vous avais crue belle.*

Un levreau pour bien faire
D'abord dépouillerez :
Gardez la peau qui vous est nécessaire,
Car, à la broche, vous l'en couvrirez.

De gros lardons sur l'heure
Le levreau faut larder,
Le farcir d'une farce, et des meilleures,
Le coudre que rien ne puisse échapper.

Que la peau l'on remette
Puis des bardes de lard,
Ensuite, avec du fil et cordelette,
On y fait, de papier, un bon rempart.

Etant cuit, on déchire
La peau tout de son long :
La rémolade est la sauce qu'il désire,
Ou bien sûr une essence de jambon.

La Cuisine en Musique, par
J. Lebas, 1738.

RABBIT HUNTING.

CHAPTER IX.

LE LAPIN : THE RABBIT.

Rabbit hunting may perhaps sound ill in the ear of a british sportsman ; but, when conducted as it sometimes is in France, it is far from being an uninteresting pursuit.

Terriers are the dogs usually employed in this sport; and a vigorous buck will often give a brace of them more than enough to do, unless they are assisted by the fovourite *coup de fusil*, so mischievously introduced into the field sports of France, for when Monsieur becomes impatient, and over anxious to seize his prey, he is always ready to terminate the

contest in that most ungenerous and unsportsmanlike manner.

When rabbit hunting is the order of the day, care is taken to stop all the earths in the warren. The adjoining cover is then carefully beaten, and the old buck is usually found in some snug corner, enjoying his repose, or basking in the sunshine. His first manœuvre is to make for his burrow. When he finds himself shut out, he never stoops to petty shifts or cowardly contrivances, but depends on his superior agility, and his thorough knowledge of all the intricacies of the place: he dashes through the thickest part of the cover, twists about, turns short, leaps over the dogs, and eludes them in a thousand ways when the game appears all but over with him: thus he, sometimes, tires out, or beats the best dogs, and only requires a clear stage and no favour to triumph over his enemies.

When the adjoining cover is searched in vain, the warrener opens a couple of burrows, and sends in his never failing and worrying ferret which soon produces the desired effect. The poor terrified rabbit bolts out; the terriers are then slipped at him; away they go helter skelter, and thus the merry chase begins.

You may, gentle reader, feel disposed to ridicule those who stoop to such boyish amusement; but when you are aware that Louis 11th, while confined to his chateau of Plessis-les-Tours, and unable to partake of his favourite sport in the forest, enjoyed the noble diversion of a royal rat hunt, and that his loyal subjects, on these occasions, furnished him with the finest rats, and most vigourous cats that could be found in *la belle France*, you may, perhaps, be induced to think more favourably of rabbit hunters, and to make a fairer allowance for their peculiar taste: *chaque personne a son goût.*

The ferret is also employed in hunting out rabbits for those who delight in rabbit shooting which, indeed, is excellent sport, more especially as it is considered no easy matter to hit a rabbit bounding away in his zigzag and rapid course.

The knowing ones, however, (and that most unpopular class has its unworthy representatives even amongst rabbit shooters), have a disreputable method of depriving the poor rabbit of its legitimate chance of escape. They remain concealed at some little distance and watch for its first appearance, at the mouth of its earth, as a rabbit always stops there for a few seconds before it starts for the cover, and thus they

shoot it without difficulty in the midst of its hasty deliberation. This cannot be considered a sportsmanlike way of doing business; no matter how dexterously it may be accomplished: a true sportsman would rather miss fifty shots than take so unfair an advantage of the poor rabbit.

The rabbit, like the hare, is a short lived animal; but, to make amends, multiplies with incredible rapidity. The period of gestation is 30 days; they have from four to ten young ones at a time. The doe seeks some retired place, makes a burrow about a yard in depth, decorates it with her own fur, and there deposits and suckles her young for six weeks or perhaps more, during which period she holds no intercourse with the buck, who is so enraged at her want of conjugal affection that, by way of revenge, he endeavours to discover her retreat, to destroy the young ones.

The fact that he will kill, and even eat them, is unquestionable. The motive ascribed is perhaps the well founded conjecture of learned naturalists.

When the doe introduces the young rabbits into the warren, the buck receives them as his own, and treats them with the greatest kindness and attention.

The best rabbits for the table are those fed in mountainous districts, where they have a variety of

wild herbs to feed upon. They are not much esteemed in France, where the markets are very plentifully supplied with house-rabbits of an enormous size, and in very excellent condition; but very inferior in flavour to the wild bush-rabbit.

It is said that Louis le 18th could, from the taste of a rabbit, tell the nature of the soil where it was fed.

I am not aware of any new receipt for dressing rabbits; but beg to suggest to the nice and curious in culinary affairs, that they make the best minced chicken that can be imagined at seasons when chickens cannot be had.

BADGER HUNTING.

CHAPTER X.

LE BLAIREAU : THE BADGER.

This is a nocturnal pursuit of a very barbarous character, but is nevertheless considered by some to afford excellent sport; especially in Germany where the badger is much prized and most anxiously preserved for the purpose.

I scarcely think that an english sportsman would hold badger hunting in much estimation; but he may, nevertheless, like to know how it is conducted.

The badger hunters assemble in the evening, and having provided themselves with a couple of active

terriers, a well nosed good beater of any description, and the necessary implements of war; namely, a large two pronged fork, and some good sticks, they proceed to the locality where the badger is known to spend his night on the feed, and try for him as closely as possible. When found, the terriers are at once slipped at him. The badger makes a regular stand up fight of it, and generally shows great pluck. When well knocked about and worried by his pugnacious antagonists, an opportunity is taken of placing the fork over his neck with which he is pinned down to the ground, while the rest of the party fall upon their unhappy victim with their merciless bludgeons, and beat him to death.

Such is the sad termination of this barbarous contest.

The badger is a curious animal not quite so large as a fox, and with something of the bundled up appearance of a young bear. His snout is long and clumsy looking; his eyes small, his tail short, his colour black and grayish with a black stripe on each side of the head; he wears a very curious pocket under his tail, from which a fetid and digusting humour is continually oozing out, and for lack of better food he licks it up occasionally. He has

remarkably strong claws on his forefeet, of which he makes very unscrupulous use in his troubles.

As he is always on the feed at night, so he remains at home during the day, and is often dug out and killed by amateurs. It is important on these occasions not to allow the dogs to enter into his earth. If they do, they are certain of getting the mange, as he is never without it.

The badger lives on the verge of woods, near cultivated lands and vineyards, where he seeks his food, which consists of fruit and vegetables. He is a wholesale destroyer of game, will surprise a partridge on her nest, devour her, and eat the eggs by way of dessert which, in some degree, mitigates, the cruelty of badger hunting. The badger has, in the course of the summer, 3 or 4 young ones, and, I regret to say that, notwithstanding the great facilities afforded for educating children in France, and the general march of intellect in all parts, she brings them up in the old way, and allows them to follow her own nefarious and mischievous practices.

OTTER HUNTING.

CHAPTER XI.

LA LOUTRE : THE OTTER.

Otter hunting is very amusing : they may be hunted with any dogs that will take the water freely and are trained to the sport.

In searching for an otter, the proper course is to proceed up the stream, because the scent descends with it, and the dogs then catch it up with wonderful expertness. One of the party should always keep a considerable distance before the dogs, and watch closely to see the otter swimming up the river, making his escape. If the water is shallow, he gets a shot at him, or endeavours to spear him : but, if it is too deep, he gives the alarm, and the dogs are soon after

him. The otter is an active and vigorous animal, and proceeds with great rapidity; nevertheless, when the water is in good condition, and not too deep, he seldom escapes; but in deep water it is extremely difficult to kill him.

When the dogs overtake and lay hold of him, he turns on them, and his bite is like the gripe of a vice: he never lets go any limb he gets hold of until he hears the bone crack, and is often speared to extricate the dog from his tenacious grasp.

It is a most curious circumstance that the otter, when wounded, immediately quits the neighbourhood, and is never seen there again.

In sweden the otter is trained to hunt and catch fish for his master, and discharges his duty with great fidelity.* When he gets fish to eat, he carefully

* A neighbour of mine, who could not get an otter for the purpose, contrived to procure an abundant supply of fish for his table in the following curious manner: A heron built its nest near his house, and let out its birds: as soon as the birds were sufficiently strong to require a full supply of food, he tied their legs together, and fastened them to the bottom of the nest: when the old birds went in search of food, he had the greedy young ones well stuffed with boiled potatoes, so that they were never able to eat the fish supplied for their use, and he found them safely deposited in the nest. The

examines them, to ascertain whether they are sufficiently fresh, as he is very particular in that respect, and in doing so, he opens the gills, and, if stale, rejects them.

The otter is a most voracious animal: he prefers fish to any other food; but eats water rats, frogs and the tender shoots of some aquatic plants when he cannot procure more dainty fare. He lives on the banks of rivers, lakes or ponds, and is an expert fisherman. When in pursuit of his prey in a river, he commences by ascending the stream for a considerable distance, and fishes home: by this means he can carry a greater load, as he is borne down by the water and he always catches more than he can manage to eat at the moment, and keeps a well supplied larder.

They generally have three or four young ones in march or april, and turn them out to shift for themselves in six or eight weeks. They take great pains to make their nests water proof, and effect their object with astonishing skill.

quantity of fish thus obtained was so enormous that I am ashamed to state it, lest it might be thought an exaggeration on my part. If you try the experiment, I recommend half boiled patatoes as they are considered extremely indigestible.

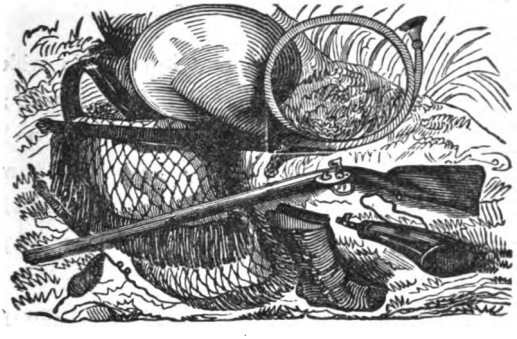
Every effort should be made to destroy them as they commit the most dreadful havoc amongst the finny tribe.

Would you preserve a numerous finny race,
Let your fierce dogs the ravenous otter chase;
(Th'amphibious monster ranges all the shores,
Darts thro'the waves and every haunt explores):
Or let the gin his roving steps betray,
And save from hostile jaws the scaly prey.

GAY'S RURAL SPORTS.

PART SECOND.

ON SHOOTING.



PHEASANT SHOOTING.

CHAPTER I.

LE FAISAN : THE COCK PHEASANT.

LA FAISANE : THE HEN PHEASANT.

Pheasants are maintained by wealthy proprietors throughout the temperate climates of Europe, as a luxury for the table and to contribute to the amusement of the aristocratic sportsman.

They are extremely delicate when young, and it requires much care and skill to rear them successfully.

The ordinary sportsman has very little to do with pheasant shooting either in England or France: however, thanks to their rambling propensities and great liability to go astray in foggy weather, he now and again gets a shot at one in both countries, and it would therefore be improper to pass them by altogether.

It is considered that the pheasant is an extremely difficult shot; he makes so much noise when flushed, rises so perpendicularly, and then glides off with such rapidity that very few sportsmen, who meet them for the first time, can deal successfully with them. A practised artist takes them when they reach the summit of the perpendicular, just before they turn off into the horizontal line, and seldom misses them: no doubt many persons miss the pheasant from over anxiety, by reason of which they fire too soon and generally cut off part of his enormous tail.

Those who live near large pheasantries and have small covers need only sow buck wheat to attract them, and will be certain of occasionally finding some stray birds at their disposal.

They prefer low marshy ground near ponds where they have thick cover; and, when in such situations, scarce any dog can spring them: they run and wind

about and twist into their beaten tracks, and so puzzle the dog that he soon loses all trace of them. The best course to pursue in such cases, is to press the dog at the commencement, and to try and spring them as quickly as possible.

The cock pheasant lives apart from the hen, except in the breeding season.

At the commencement of the spring, the hen makes her nest at the foot of a tree, and lays from 12 to 15 eggs of a greenish gray colour, spotted with brown, and not quite so large as a hen egg. The period of her incubation is 24 days.

Pheasants generally remain during the autumn and spring in young plantations, or low copses, from which they visit the newly sown grounds around them, and consume a very considerable portion of the seed, and thus inflict a serious injury on agriculturists.

They only live six or seven years, which is the ordinary life of the common hen.

Those who keep pheasant preserves generally have the eggs hatched by the common hen. When the birds come out they are left for 24 hours without food, and then put into a cage constructed for the purpose, where they are fed for 15 days before they

are allowed any further liberty. They are very fond of maggots, and the eggs of ants: when they cannot be obtained, they are fed upon a mixture of eggs, bread and lettuce, chopped up together, and are not allowed to drink any thing. They are very sparingly fed, and get very little at a time, and are thus gradually strengthened and fortified against attacks to which they are subject.

After a month the diet is somewhat changed, and the quantity of food considerably augmented. Wheat is at first very sparingly used. According as they advance they are considered safer from diseases and accidents until the first moulting, which is a most critical period. The main point is to give them the purest and freshest water, otherwise they get the pip from which they never recover.

There are various kinds of pheasants, such as the golden and silver pheasant: but they are mere show or fancy birds. The sportsman has nothing to do with such animals in his professional vocation; so we shall leave them for the bird-fanciers, and proceed to the next chapter.

PARTRIDGE SHOOTING.

CHAPTER II.

THERE ARE THREE SORTS OF PARTRIDGE :

LA PERDRIX GRISE : THE COMMON GRAY PARTRIDGE.

LA PERDRIX ROUGE : THE RED PARTRIDGE.

LA BARTAVELLE : THE BARTAVELLE.

La Perdrix grise.

Shooting sportsmen may consider partridge the staple game of France. They are found in the greatest abundance throughout the entire country, which, being chiefly in tillage, affords them an ample range.

The commencement of the shooting season, *l'ouverture de la chasse*, is a period of much interest and of considerable excitement.

The prefet of the department (who may be compared to the lieutenant of an english county), after receiving an official report of the state of the crops within his jurisdiction, fixes the day for the commencement of the season. His decree is immediately transmitted to the mayors of the several *communes* throughout the department and is, by them, formally announced to the public. This course appears preferable to the english system of uniformly commencing on the 1st of september, without regard to the crops, which, in backward seasons and in late districts, often remain much longer on the ground.

In such cases the allowance of a few days might prevent both damage and annoyance, as nothing can be more repugnant to the feelings of a sportsman than the idea of trampling down corn, and kicking out beans in beating for game, except, perhaps, the uncomfortable reflection of being in the hands of a merciless *procureur du roi* for having inadvertently done so, which is universally admitted to be rather an unpleasant position.

The excitement occasioned by the opening of the shooting season is, by no means confined, to mere sporting circles: it runs through all the ramifications of society. The sportsman hails it as the revival of

his cherished pursuit, and hastens to enjoy the sport. Meanwhile the luxurious gastronomist rubs his hands, and smacks his lips, in anticipation of the delicious *rôti* and his favourite *perdrix aux choux* in which, (rest assured), he feels no small interest.

If you ramble through the town, you meet numerous parties starting at all hours and in every direction, some well, some ill equipped, but all hastening *à la chasse* full of energy and expectation, and eagerly bent on indiscriminate slaughter.

Such is the effect of the revolutions of 1789 and 1830, upon partridge shooting, which is no longer reserved for the exclusive enjoyment of a privileged class, and which, ere another half century rolls over, will scarcely exist as an amusement in this highly cultivated and populous country.

The *chasseur épicier* usually sets out as soon as he can see his way through the town gates, fancying that he, thereby, secures numerous advantages over his less active neighbours. The portly *rentier* being a person of less calculating, or of more indolent habits, is much less precipitate: you may see him at, a more convenient hour, turning quietly out of some retired street, in his dark blouse and broad brimmed felt hat, with a newish double barrel carelessly slung over his

shoulder, and a sleek well fed, submissive looking pointer at his heels, presenting altogether a rather business-like appearance, and yet it is an unquestionable fact that he usually buys his game from the *braconniers;* and, on his return, ostentatiously parades them as his own shooting, giving a marvellous account of the performance of his parlour dog, and of the astonishing superiority of his double barrel, and modestly leaving his admiring friends to draw the ready made, cut and dry conclusion that he is no ordinary sportsman.

The french *chasseurs* are most indefatigable beaters, and frequently travel over the entire ground themselves, seldom allowing their dogs beyond the range of their guns. It is obvious that such a system imposes much additional labour upon all parties concerned, and that a few active and well trained dogs, hunted in a sportsmanlike manner, would beat ten times more ground, find considerably more game, and leave Monsieur nothing to do but to smoke his cigar, (at which he is no inconsiderable practitioner), and to knock down his birds according as he found them. Those, however, are advantages which british sportsmen alone know how to secure, and which must, at all times, produce astonishing effects in this country,

more especially as the unlimited extent of the tillage affords the birds such unbounded scope, that nothing short of superior dogs can secure brilliant success.

Some of these *chasseurs* remain in favourite localities where they know that scattered coveys will, sooner or later, arrive, mark them as they come, pick them up in odd birds, and frequently fill their huge *carnassières* in this very sluggish way. Others ramble over the surrounding country, depend upon more active exertions, and succeed equally well; but the best shooting is usually obtained by some english sportsman who enjoys the invidious reputation of being the crack shot of the town, and maintains it with becoming dignity.

It is sometimes exceedingly difficult to find the remains of a broken covey, scattered in good cover over a tolerably extensive range; especially when the weather is warm, and the dogs are fatigued after a long beat. These scattered birds being always in a state of great alarm lie perfectly motionless, and emit scarcely any scent, so that the best dogs pass them over, unless they accidentally stumble upon them.

I was once so circumstanced with a brace of dogs quite done up: the birds were scattered over an

extensive mountain heath, and after a fruitless search, I sat down without the least expectation of seeing any more of them. It was between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, in still warm weather, and, in something less than half an hour, I heard the shrill *kee-e-wick* not a hundred yards from where I sat: I took the hint, you may imagine, was kept very busy for the remainder of the evening, and had prime sport.

I can therefore recommend this manœuvre in similar cases with much confidence, and have no doubt it will be found very successful.

Some very fastidious persons think it an unsportsmanlike proceeding; but, I confess, I see no just ground for the imputation, as I consider it perfectly justifiable under such circumstances to find birds in the best way we can, provided we deal fairly with them when discovered. I shall however leave the question for the decision of those who assume jurisdiction over such matters, simply reserving to myself the right of acting according to my own discretion and taste on all such occasions, which, it must be admitted, is a very modest reservation.

This calling is often a fatal business.

Partridges uniformly call, for a few minutes (to collect their scattered party), before they take their

accustomed flight from the feeding ground to the cover, where they pass the night, or from the cover to the feeding ground the following morning.

Poachers, being well aware of their habits, lurk about suspected localities until they hear them calling, and having thus discovered their haunts, generally take the entire covey at a haul with their destructive nets.

In good covers, such as clover, turnips and potatoes, it is easy enough to get near birds; but they sometimes take to running before the dogs, and, then gain so much upon them, that they are apt to rise unexpectedly either out of shot, or at very inconvenient distances.

Those who keep behind their dogs, urging them on, and continually speaking to them, may calculate upon frequently coming in for this species of annoyance. The birds take the hint much quicker than the dogs on these occasions, and steal off with wonderful adroitness. The best course to pursue is to go well ahead of the dogs, and get the birds between you and them, and then advance cautiously and spring them: when so sprung, they often fly right and left, afford the most beautiful shots, separate and scatter through the adjoining covers

where they are easily picked up in single birds.

If however they are found in small patches of clover or potatoes, and commence running before the dogs, you may do worse than go to the end of the clover or potatoes, and allow the dogs to trail them down quietly. They generally rise according as they reach the end of the cover, and thus often afford several shots. Even when birds lie well in such cover, which they will always do if it is wet, it is advisable to approach them sideways, or in front of the dog, and not to go behind him, which is, for many reasons, a most objectionable proceeding.

Numerous recipes are given by experienced sportsmen for getting near, and obtaining shots at wild birds; but no sovereign remedy has ever been suggested: it still remains the difficulty, *par excellence*, in partridge shooting, and is no where more felt than in the heavy and interminable fallows of France during the after season, when the birds become perfectly unapproachable; this is attributable to two very sufficient causes: the french farmer ploughs up his land as soon as he removes his crop, and away goes the cover, and the french *chasseurs* are unceasingly hunting them from one fallow to another until they become as wild as widgeons, and both see and

hear, and even smell them, (as indeed well they may), at incredible distances.

What remedy can be suggested in such a state of things?....

My intelligent medical adviser has the happiest knack imaginable of getting rid of inconvenient difficulties; and how could medical men get on without that knack, it is in constant demand. I once complained to him that I could not digest fish, and begged of him to give me some recipe to assist in that essential operation. I fully expected that he would suggest the use of some very efficient sauce, or order them to be cooked in some particular manner; but he did neither the one nor the other. He quaintly replied: *Il n'y a rien de plus simple; ne les mangez pas.*

Now I much fear I am driven to the necessity of adopting his mode of proceeding, as the fact is that the admission must be made, there is no effectual remedy, none upon which the least reliance can be placed, and if experiments must be made, not knowing better, I recommend the following: put them up; mark them, and then approach the spot, without a dog, in a sloping direction, as if you meant to pass them by, and take care, in doing so, to have

the wind full in your face, and the more you have of it the better. If any undulation in the surface of the ground affords you the means of concealing your approach, you will of course avail yourself of it (I need not tell you that partridges never look at anything through a hill); but be quick, a slow deliberate pace is always the most alarming to birds. They may thus allow you to get within shot of them before they rise; if they do, your object is accomplished: if not, mark them, and begin again, and you may go on until you are utterly disgusted and heartily sick of it. I know of no other course in this open country: but remember your chance of success mainly depends upon your having the wind full in your face, and your not taking out a flashy handkerchief to wipe the tears from your eyes, which giddy young sportsmen occasionally do and spring the covey at once.

For my own part, whenever I find partridge so wild as to require the adoption of such contrivances to get near them, my remedy is to back out of the concern, and return home, as nothing short of superior partridge shooting could induce me to trudge over those heavy fallows even twenty years ago, when I found it much easier to walk over ploughed fields, I presume, from some alteration in the mode

of ploughing them which may not perhaps be otherwise discoverable.

If any very scientific person wishes to try the effect of a boisterous day, *after a heavy fall of rain,* when he will be certain to have the additional comfort of carrying half a stone weight of sticky clay on each foot, I have no doubt he will get shots, and as little that he will earn them. In such cases, he should always approach the birds across the furrows, and not down along them, and make as little noise as possible.

It would be an idle affectation of knowledge to attempt to point out those districts in which the best partridge shooting may be obtained in the different departments of France, as partridge are found in abundance in almost every department, and are scattered over the entire surface of the country; and there is no difficulty in obtaining sufficient information as to the best localities wherever a sportsman may happen to be. It may however be useful to give my reader a few general hints on the subject: Imprimis; he need not expect to have much sport, though he may often find game, in the vicinity of large towns where there are always so many sportsmen continually hunting them, that the birds

generally rise at long distances and fly out of sight : he should therefore retire into the rural districts, and put up at some small town, such as Fauquembergue, Fruges, Pernes or Thérouanne, which lie in the very best partridge districts in the Pas-de-Calais ; or at some convenient village where he finds abundance of game. The hilly districts will always be found preferable to the low flat country along the coast, where the partridge shooting is bad, and where the country is usually so intersected by drains that there is much difficulty and considerable loss of time in getting through it. Hence the shooting about Calais, Gravelines and Dunkerque is miserably bad.

There is no sort of difficulty in obtaining comfortable accommodation in the small towns and villages throughout France, and sportsmen are not constrained to waste their time, or their money, in hasty and vexatious journeys backwards and forwards from some great town to such shooting locality as they may select, for want of accommodation on the spot : they will always find comfortable fare, a clean bed, an excellent bottle of wine, and have plenty of game for their supper.

Partridges pair in the month of march when the cocks fight with great desperation. The hens uni-

formly witness the conflict, and reward the victorious champion : but if any accident deprives her of him, she immediately accepts of his vanquished antagonist.

Game keepers are so well aware of this amiable weakness that, whenever they have any supernumerary cocks in their preserves, they count them and kill as many without reference to their being the paired or unpaired birds. Killing these supernumerary cocks is a most important affair, as they search for the nests, and, if they find them, destroy the eggs, perhaps for revenge.

The partridge makes a simple nest in which she lays from 12 to 20 eggs in the latter end of april , or the beginning of may. The period of incubation is about three weeks. When the birds come out, they remain 36 hours in the nest without food, and then

follow the hen from place to place. The young birds get the horse shoe on their breasts in about three months, and are generally able to fly at St John's day; at least so says the proverb, *à la saint Jean, perdreau volant.*

Partridges sometimes make choice of injudicious places for their nests, and build them in crops that come to maturity before their birds are out: in such cases, when the crops are cut, the eggs are destroyed. The hen, on those occasions, usually makes a new nest, but seldom succeeds in rearing her second clutch in time for the shooting season, when, being too weak, they are snapped up by greedy dogs, trampled in the clover, or shot by dandy sportsmen who are delighted to find something they can kill.

The male partridge is known by his *call* which is louder and more lingering than that of the hen; by his spurs and the sign of the horse shoe on his breast. The young birds are distinguished from the old ones by the last feather in the wing being pointed instead of being rounded, and by the light colour of the feet.

Except in the breeding season, partridges remain in coveys composed of the old couples, and the young birds and any straggling birds that may join them from broken coveys: they frequent cultivated grounds

and vineyards, and seldom enter woods, unless when much hunted or frightened by birds of prey, and they scarcely ever forsake the neighbourhood of the place in which they were bred.

La Perdrix rouge.

This bird is much larger than the common gray partridge: like them they assemble in coveys at the commencement of the season, but are not, by any means, so social, and are much easier scattered. When on the ground they separate more from each other, are apt to rise in single birds and to fly in different directions, and when scattered seldom unite for a considerable time afterwards. Towards the latter end of the season, they rise in a perpendicular manner, and then shoot off like the pheasant, horizontally, with the utmost rapidity, and make much noise in rising. When they rise thus, they are considered a most difficult shot; and, for rapidity of flight, no game can be compared to them. Indeed killing them, under all circumstances, is considered the criterion of first rate performance.

They generally stand a dog very well after being two or three times flushed, and when after running

some distance, they then crouch before a dog; they lie like stones.

They ramble more than the gray partridge, and sometimes quit a neighbourhood without any assignable cause, and never return to it. They do not agree well with the other birds, and their quarrels may perhaps frequently drive them from the neighbourhood. They prefer woody and mountainous districts to an open country, and frequently perch upon trees, and remain upon them for a few minutes.

They breed like the common partridge, but are seldom met in such strong coveys, and when the hen begins to hatch, the cock forsakes her, and pays no further attention to the proceedings.

They are very beautiful birds, but are not considered so good for the table as the gray partridge, not having so delicate a flavour. They, however, bring a higher price in the market in consequence of their additional size and splendid appearance.

They are sometimes seen in the markets, at Lille and St.-Omer, but are plentiful in the southern, eastern and western departments, and at Amiens, and Paris. They are very abundant in Britany.

La Bartavelle.

This is the largest partridge known, and is fully twice the size of the gray partridge: it much resembles the red partridge, but its *call* is more continuous and of a peculiarly monotonous tone: hence its name from *bartaveou* which, in Languedoc signifies the noise of a mill. This bird is wilder than the red partridge. It frequents mountainous and woody countries; and, as it takes very long flights, it is a most laborious and fatiguing pursuit to follow them. They are found in the mountainous districts of Herault, Aude, Cantal, Puy-de-Dôme, Haute-Loire and Ardèche and in the Pyrenees and the Alps. They are also very plenty in Italy, and in the mediterranean Islands.

The bartavelle is the greek partridge.

QUAIL SHOOTING.

CHAPTER III.

LA CAILLE : THE QUAIL.

This interesting and beautiful little bird affords excellent sport : they are very abundant in the southern and western departments of France, and are more or less scattered over the country, but are not plenty in the northern districts.

Whoever finds a bevy of quails, and has an active close beating well nosed dog, may calculate, with great certainty, upon filling his bag. They neither rise together nor startle the sportsman like partridges, but get up quietly one after another, or, at most, in pairs, make very little noise, fly in an undeviating

straight line, and seldom go any great distance at a flight.

Some sportsmen consider the quail a rather difficult mark: They unquestionably move at a rapid pace, but in such an even and regular course, that those who are accustomed to their peculiar mode of flight, seldom miss them, and those who are not, contrive to do so occasionally. They however always lie so well, and get up so near sportsmen, that there is no hurry or confusion and time enough for the slowest shots, and they always appeared to me (though I have not had much quail shooting, for they are not plenty where I received the best part of my shooting education), a very easy shot, even next to that unmissable gentleman, the corncrake.

The quail is a bird of passage in France: it comes here to breed, and only remains from may to sep-

tember. On their first arrival, they go into the green wheat which, then, affords them ample cover, and into the early meadows, from which circumstance they are then called *cailles vertes*. They afterwards go into the buck wheat, hemp and clover crops, and become as fat as ortolans, when they deservedly acquire the name of *cailles grasses*, and would be deemed presentable to any corporation in Christendom.

In the month of may they are exceedingly abundant on the coast of the mediterranean where they arrive from Africa in vast numbers, and are frequently so fatigued on their passage, that they drop into the water before they can reach the land. In this helpless condition they stretch out their little wings to catch the breeze, and are thus wafted to the shore. Crowds of people watch their arrival, and, wading into the water, catch them by thousands. Under Charles 10th this was prohibited, and the *préfets* of the several departments along the coast sent the *gendarmes*, *gardes-champêtres* and police to protect them on their arrival. This polite attention has, however, since the revolution of 1830, been withdrawn, and they are consequently not so numerous as heretofore, which is much to be regretted.

It is said by some writers that, when fatigued and

unable to continue their flight, they settle on the rigging of ships, and occasionally collect in such numbers that they overturn and sink them. This certainly is rather incredible, and, if satisfactorily vouched would, in all likelihood, give rise to a new species of marine ensurance; but I think we may relieve our enterprising merchants from all anxiety on that score.

The quail is known all over Europe: Their regular annual migration into Asia and Africa is exceedingly curious and very unaccountable. They accomplish their object with much system. They quit the northern districts in the month of august, and approach the mediterranean coast where they collect in great numbers in the month of september, when they take their departure.

They have been occasionally found, during the winter and the early part of the spring, in old walls and hollow trees in a torpid state, but few remain in France after september.

They are very handsome birds; the head of the male is mottled with black and reddish colours, with three beautiful longitudinal white streaks, one on the top of the head, and the other two on its sides passing above the eyes. The throat is red and has some

small streaks of a reddish brown upon it, and the neck and back are of a mixture of black red and gray. The female has its neck white and its breast whitish and mottled with roundish black spots.

Quails very much resemble the common partridge in their habits: they form their nest and bring out their birds in the same manner. They also prefer cultivated fields to mountainous districts, or woods, which they never enter from choice. On their arrival in France they pair, and generally lay from 12 to 18 eggs; when the female begins to hatch, the male deserts her.

Quails are scattered over the country while they remain in France, and are occasionally found by most sportsmen in partridge shooting; they are great ramblers, and seldom remain long in any particular locality. Many sportsmen dislike meeting them as they are apt to make young dogs puzzle and poke about too much; but they afford excellent sport, are very superior birds for the table, and are as soon cooked as an egg.

RAIL SHOOTING.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE ARE FOUR SORTS OF RAILS:

LE RALE DE GÉNÊT : THE LAND RAIL.

LE RALE D'EAU : THE WATER RAIL.

LA MAROUETTE : THE MAROUETTE.

LE RALE BAILLON : THE BAILLON.

Land rails are birds of passage in France : they come in vast numbers along with the quails from Africa , and are usually found in the same localities; hence the *râle de génêt* is also called the king of the quails. When they reach France they proceed into the interior of the country in large flocks travelling

by night, and resting by day in any convenient cover they chance to meet *en route*. And when they find a suitable locality, they scatter over the country, get into the meadows and marshy grounds, and flock no more. They then pair and breed, and afterwards return to Africa with the quails.

Rails are exceedingly unwilling to fly, and depend more on their legs than upon their wings for protection: hence, when they get into any tolerable cover, it is next to impossible to spring them; and, when sprung, they seem to fly with much difficulty, stretching out their necks and hanging their legs in a vertical position as if they were wounded, notwithstanding which they have very large wings in proportion to the size and weight of their bodies.

They present a mark that scarcely any sportsman can miss, on which account, most beginners like to meet with them.

I recollect when I considered them quite a God-send, as I was certain of knocking them down before I could calculate with much certainty on touching a snipe or a woodcock.

It requires an exceedingly active dog to spring them, as they seldom stand an instant, and run with such

wonderful celerity through the grass without apparently moving it, that a cautious dog has no chance of overtaking them, and a sportsman can form no idea of the direction they take.

Whenever a sportsman falls in with a flock of rails in France, he sould pursue them and give them no quarter; for, beyond all question, they will proceed on their journey the following night, and he need never expect to see them again. They keep on the wing the entire night, and make very long journeys.

When the meadows are cut, the rails go into the buck wheat and oat crops; and, later in the season, they take refuge in the young copses in waste lands, and in the fields of broom so common in some parts of France, particularly in Britany, where the farmers, when the land is exhausted, sow broom with the last crop they cultivate; and, after allowing it to gain some strength, turn in their cattle and treat it as pasture for a few years, until they consider that the land has recovered its fertility : they then root it up, burn the roots and branches, manure the soil with the ashes and commence a new course of tillage. This is a curious expedient, and shows how backward they are in the science of agriculture. It would be

rather difficult to persuade an english farmer to try such an experiment.

The female rail makes her simple nest on the ground in meadow land, or in the side of a drain. She lays from 8 to 10 eggs of a brownish yellow colour, with reddish spots : they are somewhat larger than those of the quail. The young birds present a very curious appearance : they are black and covered with down (like young ducks), and follow her through the grass : they live upon insects and the seeds of various grasses and plants, and all sorts of grain, and become exceedingly fat and high flavoured in the after season.

They are greatly esteemed by some of our best judges who consider them much superior to partridge or quail, of which, indeed, there can be no question ; but as they are good for nothing until september and october, and are generally shot in the early part of the season, many persons are ignorant of the superiority of the rail, when in good condition.

The *râle d'eau*, *râle baillon* and *la marouette* are also birds of passage, differing something in plumage and size, but strongly resembling each other in their habits.

They frequent marshy grounds and stagnant pools.

They arrive in France in march and april, and leave it in the winter season : they are all quite as unwilling to fly as the *râle de génêt;* and, when hard pressed, they sometimes plunge into the water, and dive, like a wounded duck, to evade a dog, and they run on the aquatic weeds like sylphs, or water fairies which you must have seen.

The nest formed by the *marouette* deserves notice as an architectural curiosity : it is built with bits of dry reeds interwoven with each other and fastened together in a most ingenious manner : the interior is decorated with moss, hair, feathers and the down of plants, and it is placed upon the surface of the water, and attached to a reed or bull rush so that it rises and falls with the flood.

When we reflect that the artist had neither hands, nor tools of any sort to accomplish his work, and that we, who have both, and the model before us, can scarcely imitate it, we cannot contemplate this extraordinary production without admiration and wonder; more especially when we consider the precarious position in which it is placed, and the beautiful and ingenious device by which it is preserved from destruction. I know of nothing to compare it to, but the nest of the golden wren, which is always

suspended in the air under the branch to which it is attached, and which is of the most delicate and beautiful structure.

WOODCOCK SHOOTING.

CHAPTER V.

LA BÉCASSE : THE WOODCOCK.

There are no less than eight sorts of woodcocks of which the three following are common in France : the others are rare, and many of them are very beautiful birds.

LA BÉCASSE ORDINAIRE : THE COMMON WOODCOCK.

LA GROSSE BÉCASSE : THE LARGE WOODCOCK *which is fully a third larger than the common bird, and of a darker colour.*

LA PETITE BÉCASSE : THE SMALL WOODCOCK, *which is something smaller than the common bird, has a longer bill, and blue feet.*

Though several woodcocks remain the entire year in the mountainous districts of France, the main

supply is drawn from the Alps and the Pyrenees where they breed in vast numbers.

When the severe winter frosts close up their favourite haunts and feeding places, they descend into the low country, and scatter through the forests, woods and small covers where they remain until spring, and then return to their mountain homes.

While thus sojourning in the low country, they afford considerable amusement to shooting sportsmen, many of whom rent forests and woods for the purpose of cock-shooting.

The french usually employ dogs in this sport, and furnish them with bells, that they may know whereabout they are and when they find game: when the dog stops, the music ceases, and hence they can often determine where the bird lies, and the best mode of obtaining a fair shot when it rises. Some sportsmen remain outside the cover, and shoot such birds as fly out, while others avail themselves of open spaces in the planting, and assist in starting the game.

Some sportsmen are wonderfully expert at shooting birds in thick covers, and prefer walking with the beaters, or starting them for themselves, to remaining outside in expectation of a shot.

When the cover consists of grown trees moderately

thinned out for timber, with underwood and briers through them, the best course is to beat for them one'self, or to have a single beater walking quietly through the cover, making very little noise, but searching closely in all likely places, and to keep a little in advance of him : by proceeding thus and keeping the ground he beats as much under command as possible; many very fair shots may be obtained provided they are quickly taken. There must be no poking for an aim on these occasions; a slow shot had much better take his chance outside.

Woodcocks, unless they have been much hunted, usually lie well before a dog, and afford a sportsman ample time to move into the best position to command their flight. When flushed, they rise with much noise, and in an awkward fluttering manner, as if they were greatly incommoded by the brambles and branches about them : but they are no sooner clear of them, and well upon the wing, than they dart off with considerable speed, and often present rather difficult shots, especially when only occasionally seen in their passage through trees.

When a cock is flying horizontally through trees, and is only now and again visible in his passage through open spaces, the best mode of dealing with

him is to fix upon some opening, a little in advance of him, through which he must immediately pass; raise your gun to the line of his flight and fire the instant he appears in it: this will be found a most successful method, if fairly tried.

When once well on the wing, and perfect master of its flight, a woodcock is an active and expert flier. I have known them (when flint guns were in vogue), dip on seeing the flash of the pan, and escape untouched from excellent shots.

Woodcocks light so heavily that they sometimes appear to fling themselves upon the ground, and the moment they light, they run off with the greatest celerity, especially in drains, hedges and rows of young trees. In such cases it is advisable either to keep well in advance of the beaters, or else to get well in advance of the place marked, and remain stationary until the beaters put them up, when they usually rise much nearer than we expect, or fly within a few yards of us, before they turn off, and afford the fairest shots imaginable.

No bird presents a more beautiful shot than a woodcock: when flushed in heath or in ferns, in the open country, they lie so well, fly so evenly and present such a splendid mark: missing them is then quite

out of the question, and the least touch brings them down.

The French sometimes employ beaters to start the birds for them, and then they proceed very much as we do in such cases; but, often, make too much noise, which is a great fault in cock shooting.

The woodcock is a very timid bird, and if alarmed and put on its guard, is very apt to *steal off* before the beaters come up, in which case there is little chance of getting near it. Beaters should therefore never be allowed to make any unnecessary noise in their progress: they should be armed with sticks, walk quietly through the planting, and strike the brambles and thick cover in all suspected places, and merely say *mark* when a bird rises and takes the direction of a shooter; for, if a cock flies off in a direction where no shot can be had at him, it is much better to allow him to go off quietly and, as it were, unnoticed.

In thus beating a cover it is advisable to keep a little in advance of the beaters: by so doing the birds come out at nice distances, and afford fair shots. When narrow skirting plantations are thus beaten, nothing can exceed the beauty of the shooting.

It is a curious fact that most sporting dogs have an

unaccountable antipathy to the woodcock, and seldom fetch it willingly. . When there is any hitch about finding a dead bird, the best way is to wave ceremony, and step for it yourself; more especially as they sometimes stick in the branches of trees in falling, and such places should always be carefully examined, when a bird is known to have dropped and cannot be discovered.

I recollect assisting two very clever beaters who were engaged for nearly an hour in searching for a cock; and we were on the point of giving it up as fruitless, when he was accidentally discovered. His head and neck were seen hanging through the branch of a spruce fir tree, several feet from the ground, and three or four yards out of the direction in which he appeared to have fallen.

Persons, who shoot in thick covers, cannot exercise too much caution in guarding against those fatal accidents which so frequently occur in such localities. The most effectual arrangement is always to hold a gun in such a position that, if accidentally discharged, it can do no mischief: this soon becomes habitual and precludes the possibility of any disaster, and, at the same time, leaves the sportsman at liberty to carry his gun in full cock when he pleases. There is no

greater fallacy than depending upon constantly cocking and uncocking a gun by way of guarding against accidents: in fact nothing can be more dangerous than the habit of constantly doing so.

The French are, in general, more systematically cautious in those respects than we are. When they enter a cover they proceed with great regularity, quite *en militaire*; keeping in line and never pointing their guns towards each other; while, on the contrary, some of our young sportsmen hurry on as if they were in reality running a race, or playing at "devil take the hindmost."

I shall never forget an instance I once witnessed of this ludicrous impetuosity: Two young gentlemen were upon the amiable dodge of trying for the first shot at a covey of partridges lying before the dogs, in a field of mangel wurzel: they had their guns in full cock, and were hastening with long strides across the ridges, when one of them was tripped up and flung upon his face, and, in his fall, plunged his gun a couple of feet into the soft earth. Had it gone off, he might have been killed, as the gun must have gone to pieces in such a position.

The other had all the shooting to himself; and, nevertheless, fired both barrels into the covey before

they were ten yards from him, of course, without touching a feather :· he was however pretty successful on the whole, as he contrived to shoot one of the dogs.

Such is always the result of over anxiety in shooting; the dogs are in much more danger than the birds.

Some writers rccommend putting a marker up a tree to watch the flight of such birds as escape, and to report where they pitch : but, I confess, I never yet saw a tree that would answer the purpose , and cannot help thinking it a most impracticable suggestion.

If you are shooting in a valley, it may be advisable to post an intelligent marker on an adjoining hill, provided you can find one competent to discharge the duty with sufficient expertness and accuracy to attain your object : but it may be easier to find the woodcock than such a marker at the moment.

The french forests and woods are sometimes so extensive and so impenetrable, that there is no possibility of shooting the woodcocks in them. In such cases they can be only obtained by stratagem founded upon an acquaintance with their habits.

The woodcock quits the cover at the dusk of the

evening, goes into the snipe haunts and marshes in the neighbourhood, or to springs or such like localities, and spends the night on the feed. It returns in the morning, just before day break to the cover where it spends the day. Before it returns into the cover, it uniformly pays a visit to some pond, spring or rivulet where it washes its feet and bill, and makes its *toilette* for the day: this is never neglected, and it is only necessary to find out these places (which is easily done, by observing their tracks and other marks they usually leave of a very conspicuous character), and to attend there, just before day break to obtain several nice shots.

It is advisable to fire at them upon the wing; they fly slowly, rather like bats than birds, and are easily shot after a little practice, but cannot be seen on the ground.

It is also better not to pick them up at the moment, as they are very apt to come in rapid succession, and the time for shooting them in this way is of short duration.

Woodcocks are found in great numbers in the forests and woods in those departments connected with the Pyrenees, and along the western coast of France; also in Britany and Normandy. They are also scat-

tered throughout the whole country, and are very abundant in favourable seasons. There is some good cock shooting in the Pas-de-Calais, about Guines and Hesdin, and they are occasionally found in the Garennes, along the coast between Boulogne and Montreuil which may be rented by sportsmen for the season on very reasonable terms.

Woodcocks breed in the Alps, in the Pyrenees, in Switzerland and Savoy and in the mountainous departments of Contal and the Puy-de-Dôme. They make their nests upon the ground, in a simple inartificial manner, and lay 4 or 5 eggs of an oblong shape, and of a reddish colour, shaded with black, and about the size of a pigeon's egg. When the birds come out, they run like young corncrakes.

There are other varieties of the woodcock known in France, some of which are extremely beautiful

birds; but they are rarely met with, and would be exceedingly well worth stuffing and preserving when shot: the following may be enumerated: *la bécasse blanche*, which is white, with the bill and feet yellow; *la bécasse rousse*, of a watered red colour on a dark red ground; *la bécasse Isabelle*, of a light yellow colour; *la bécasse à tête rousse*, with the body whitish, the wings brown and the head reddish; *la bécasse aux ailes blanches*, with white wings and otherwise resembling the common bird. They all have remarkably fine eyes, and are very quick sighted: they feed on worms and insects, and pass the night on the feed, as already mentioned.

SNIPE SHOOTING.

CHAPTER VI.

LA BÉCASSINE : THE SNIPE.

There are three sorts of snipes which differ materially in size, plumage and habits.

LA BÉCASSINE ORDINAIRE : THE COMMON SNIPE.

LA GROSSE BÉCASSINE : THE SOLITARY SNIPE.

LA PETITE BÉCASSINE : THE JACKSNIPE.

Snipes are birds of passage in France. They arrive in the autumn and throughout the winter months in large flocks, and scatter over the fens marshy bottoms and low meadow lands, where they are killed in vast numbers both by the French and English snipe shooters, and they generally disappear in severe frosts.

In beating these fens and snipe haunts the french sportsmen employ dogs both to set, and fetch the birds when shot: they wear huge *marais* boots,* which come up above their knees and keep them perfectly dry, even when walking through water, which is often unavoidable in these localities and could not be well accomplished without them.

All snipe shooters are aware that to have brilliant sport, they must have suitable weather: a darkish lowering day, with rather a fresh breeze, will be found most favourable for this amusement. The birds lie well in such weather, and as they uniformly fly against the wind (when there is any worth estimating), it is only necessary to beat down the wind to obtain beautiful cross shots. Besides being retarded in their progress, their flight is steadier and slower than in calm weather.

On those occasions all snipe shooters recommend firing a little in advance of the birds, more or less according to circumstances; but no fixed rule can be laid down to regulate the extent of this allowance, the amount of which depends on so many and such varying circumstances; the rate at which the bird is

*M. Paternelle, 39, rue du Damier, St-Omer, makes excellent marais boots at about 50 francs per pair.

moving, the direction of its flight, its distance, the time gained by detonating guns, and by the expertness of the artist, all enter into the calculation. The being able to hit off this allowance, and to judge correctly and promptly of distances are matters of serious moment in shooting, and have perhaps more to do with first rate performance than is generally supposed.

The french snipe haunts in the vicinity of large towns are too much beaten to afford any opportunity of trying colonel Hawker's advice: "First, to go down wind, and walk up the wild birds, and then to let go an old pointer and return up wind to find the lazy ones." Which, however, is a most valuable suggestion, and of which I have often availed myself in, perhaps, the best snipe haunts in Europe* where the supply of game does not depend upon occasional flights of birds, but continues uniform and plentiful throughout the entire season. In these haunts, dogs are seldom used, and would do more harm than good, the great difficulty being to avoid putting them up too fast: we therefore usually walk them up, proceeding in the quietest and most cautious

* In Ireland.

manner possible. This, however, is not the case when birds are scattered over large bogs or extensive rushy districts, or driven into the upland by floods: in such localities, from the great extent of ground to be beaten, dogs are not only useful, but quite indispensable.

Most snipe shooters are aware that birds are *often* sprung out of the recent tracks of the beater when he returns upon the beaten ground: but no attempt, that I am aware of, has ever been made to account for this very singular occurrence. I have been assured by an old sportsman, who is full of curious and interesting information on such topics, that he, several times, saw snipes running from the unbeaten into the beaten ground, which he ascribed to their searching for some particular sort of food rendered perhaps more available by the trampling of the beater over the spongy surface, of which trampling, he considers, they have a peculiarly quick perception.

I have never seen snipes upon the ground, except on springs, or by the sides of rivulets, in severe frost, and can therefore say nothing in corroboration of this singular theory, but think it deserves notice.

Some sportsmen consider snipe shooting exceedingly difficult, and give various directions on the subject.

Amongst those colonel Hawker desires us to remain perfectly unconcerned till they have done *twisting*, and then bring up the gun, and fire.

Nobody can feel greater respect for colonel Hawker's opinions than I do: at the same time I must confess that I think this *twisting*, as it is called, deserves no such consideration, and that no sportsman should pay the least attention to the circumstance. A slow poking shot, who deliberately puts up his gun, and then endeavours to cover his bird, and makes half a dozen efforts to do so before he can master courage enough to pull the trigger, may find these evolutions rather embarrassing; but, as no snipe can twist itself out of the range of a charge of shot, some better system, than waiting until it stops twisting, must be adopted: *the difficulty should be dealt with, and not set up as insurmountable.*

Now, before we consider the best mode of dealing with this difficulty, it is desirable to notice the extreme importance (on such occasions particularly), of firing *at proper distances*, and the effect of so doing.

Those who take the trouble of comparing the manner in which their guns deliver the charge at from 20 to 40 yards, will find a particular distance

at which the charge is evenly distributed over the largest circle it can so cover, and will see that a bird, at that distance, cannot fly through the shot untouched, and therefore cannot escape any where within the circle, i. e. at from a foot to 18 inches, perhaps more, on either side of its centre: while, on the contrary, at shorter distances, the diameter of the circle will be proportionally diminished, and at longer distances the shot will be proportionally scattered, until a bird may fly through it in a dozen ways without being touched. Another elementary consideration seldom sufficiently attended to, is having a gun properly stocked so that it may fall into its true position without any awkward exertion: on this the bringing up of the barrels *evenly* to the eye, mainly depends. The general defect is that the breeches are left below the line of vision, and then the charge passes above the mark.

I once had a gun newly stocked, and found that my birds came down in a slovenly and wounded condition, as if they only got rambling grains. I concluded that the gun had lost its shooting. I took it to Mr Rigby, the deservedly eminent Dublin gunsmith, who is himself an excellent shot, and mentioned my suspicion on the subject: but he at once decided

that the defect was in the stock, and his opinion proved correct, for a slight alteration set all right: from which circumstance it may be seen how much depends on having one's measure taken for a gun.

Now, having said so much on these two very important elementary points, because they have a direct bearing upon the mode of proceeding which I am about to recommend, I trust I may be permitted, without presumption, to advise my readers, instead of waiting for snipes to leave off twisting, (which they are not likely to do to accommodate any body), or troubling themselves about obtaining easy shots, to try the following simple method, by which I have, for many years, contrived to bag between 2 and 300 brace of snipes each season.

The moment a bird rises, fix your eye upon it and follow it until it nearly reaches the distance at which you know your gun is most efficient; then bring up your gun, throwing the whole length of the barrels from the breeches to the sight into the line of vision already formed between you and the bird, and the moment the gun is in its place, fire: there is no difficulty in attaining sufficient expertness in thus dealing with game. The difficult point is to determine the true distance at which the bird should be fired at,

with sufficient promptitude, and the general mistake is firing too soon.

Whenever I hear the caution against firing at twisting snipes, it reminds me of the directions so often given to swallow-shooters, to fire at them just on the turn, when they usually balance themselves for a second in the air, and are as easily shot as if they were perched upon a tree.

But that is a trick upon swallow shooting, and quite unworthy of the name : a trick on snipe shooting is not so easily accomplished.

Snipes are occasionally found in great abundance in the extensive fens and marshes throughout France; particularly in the north of France and in Britany, and in those departments which border on the Pyrenees where the snipe shooting is very superior : in the Pas-de-Calais they are occasionally found in great abundance; in the fens of Clairmarais, in the vicinity of St-Omer; in the low marshy grounds about Guines and at Montreuil where there is most excellent snipe shooting. There is also very fine snipe shooting in the fens, near Nantes.

Snipes are indeed scattered over the entire country, and the nature of their haunts is so well known, that no sportsman can ever have any difficulty in ascer-

taining where they are to be had, in whatever department he may be.

When large flocks of snipes are known to have arrived in the fens and marshes of Clairmarais, the St-Omer *chasseurs* make the most ludicrous efforts to outstrip their brethren and be first amongst them.

Nobody, without having seen these *battues aux bécassines*, could believe that such a party could be any where collected for such a purpose. These exquisitely funny *chasseurs* proceed to some favourite haunt, where they muster before they have sufficient light to distinguish one another, and if you chanced to see them platooned under the willow trees, at the first dawn of day, you certainly never could suppose that they were merely on a snipe shooting excursion. There they stand with their huge *carnassières* (full large enough to contain half a dozen wild geese with the greatest imaginable comfort) on their backs, and a set of shivering half starved curs, ready to fetch anything they can grab to their greedy and impatient masters, at their heels.

They no sooner obtain an indistinct view of the marais, than away they trudge down the sloughs, and puddles in their great unwieldy marais boots; and why people should incumber themselves with such

boots, who never wear stockings, is more than I can comprehend or explain : but no matter : they wear the boots and they do not wear the stockings, and away they go with cigars in their filthy mouths, puffing out an infinity of smoke, thick and dirty like themselves, as they advance in parties of from six to a dozen. Up gets a snipe unconscious that his short visit could have caused such an insurrectionary movement : but he is soon undeceived ; a hot fire is at once opened upon him, and a couple of pound of snipe shot sent whistling about his ears ; bang, bang, bang, go the *chasseurs aux bécassines* as the poor terrified snipe rises higher and higher and quits for ever the truly savage scene. They recharge and advance anew ; up gets another ; away they go, bang, bang, bang. Some unlucky rambling grain tips the terrified fugitive in the pinion, and down it tumbles into the sedge which it had just so hastily left.

The scene that then follows baffles all description : *Il est touché, mon Dieu! il est touché ; apporte, apporte*, is shouted forth by the whole party. Away go the curs to fetch the prize ; and, as the right of property turns entirely upon the fact of possession, each urges his dog as they eagerly rummage the deep hedge. At length one finds it, another snatches it up,

a third gets it by the head, a fourth by the wing, a fifth by the leg, and thus it is soon torn to pieces and divided amongst the several claimants by their faithful representatives.

Such is the system to which these fly-by-night *chasseurs aux bécassines* have reduced the noble art of snipe shooting : but you must not imagine, gentle reader, that such are the sportsmen of France ; by no means. These are the young *chasseurs épiciers, cordonniers, ferblantiers, chandeliers* et *ramoneurs* of her populous towns spending a few hours *à la chasse aux bécassines.*

It is extraordinary that snipes are found in almost every part of the world. Captain Cook found them in Asia and America. Don Antonio de Cordoua speaks of them on the coast of Patagonia and in the Falkland Islands, and Mc Carthy tells us they are found in Van Diemen's land.

They sometimes breed in France, and I have occasionally seen their nests in Ireland. They lay 4 or 5 eggs of a light green colour, mottled with brown and pale gray spots.

La grosse Bécassine : the solitary Snipe.

The solitary snipe is full twice the size of the common bird : it is well known in Picardy, where it is found from august to november; and in Provence, where it is found in march and april, and also in september and october. It frequents the marais, and delights in nice clear streams : it does not lie well before a dog but usually runs like a rail.

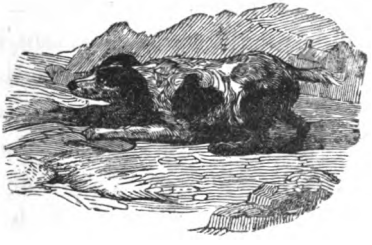
La petite Bécassine : the Jacksnipe.

Jacksnipes are well known to all sportsmen : they are usually met in odd birds, or at most in pairs; and are occasionally found in all snipe haunts. They are about the size of a lark : they sometimes lie so closely that it is most difficult to flush them; and, when flushed, they fly in a zigzag way more like bats than birds, and present rather a difficult shot for deliberate aim takers who are very apt to miss them.

They are very beautiful birds, having various lively tints in their plumage, and are considered the highest flavoured snipe we have.

I knew a gentleman of that deliberate aim taking class who had a jacksnipe, in about an acre of

sedgy bottom at the extremity of his lawn, at which he fired above 200 shots in the course of a season, and expressed the deepest regret at having, one day, accidentally killed it. It was unquestionably a most unfortunate accident; and I think it affected him so much that he gave up shooting from thenceforth.



DUCK SHOOTING.

CHAPTER VII.

LE CANARD SAUVAGE : THE WILD DUCK.

LE CANARD SAUVAGE MALE : THE MALLARD.

LE CANARD SIFFLEUR : THE WIDGEON.

LA SARCELLE : THE TEAL.

The prodigious number, and endless variety, of ducks that pour into France, during the winter months, from the northern boundaries of Europe, is perfectly astonishing. To account for such an unlimited supply, it is necessary to take a glance at the inexhaustable sources from whence it is drawn.

All voyagers speak with amazement of the extraordinary quantity of water-fowl on the northern coasts

of Europe. Regnard, in his *Voyaye en Laponie*, informs us that he found the rivers and lakes in Lapland literally covered with ducks, geese and swans; and that he experienced no difficulty in procuring sufficient to maintain his entire crew without going out of his course to obtain them.

Jacques Arago, in his *Promenade autour du monde*, also informs us that, but for the extraordinary abundance of the wild-ducks, the crew of the Uranie must have perished. Such then are the sources from whence this wonderful supply is annually drawn.

Chauteaubriand, in his *Génie du Christianisme*, considers the arrival of the ducks, at a period when the land is stripped of its produce, and unproductive, as a special provision for the support of mankind.

It may have been some such consideration, that induced the clergy of France to allow their faithful flocks the privilege of eating widgeon, and teal, upon their days of abstinence: a comfortable indulgence which they, at present, enjoy in France, and perhaps in no other roman catholic country.

These valuable birds reach the coast of France in large flocks during the winter season, and in the early part of spring; and scatter over the extensive fens and marshes in the north of France, in Normandy

and in Britany, where the duck-shooters kill them in such numbers that, after supplying the neighbouring markets, they are sent in enormous quantities both to London and Paris.*

Before we proceed to consider how the huttier, or fen duck shooter, conducts his business, we must take a cursory glance at these fens and marshes, which deserve particular notice, and are frequently visited as objects of curiosity by persons who feel no interest in wild-ducks, at least until they are nicely roasted and flavoured with lemon juice.

The french word for fen being *marais*, these localities go by that name in France and often extend

* Persons who wish to purchase wild ducks in the french markets, should be very particular in examining them closely, as the peasantry often pass off their tame ducks for wild ones; and the resemblance is frequently so perfect that a cursory inspection is not sufficient. They can, however, be always detected by examining the *claws*, as those of the wild bird are invariably black. Many persons detect the tame ducks by inspecting their *bills*, as the french peasants generally mark them, when young, with a particular cut on the bill, to distinguish them from those of their neighbours; and the remains of the mark, nearly obliterated by the growth of the bill, will in 90 cases out of a 100, be discovered by a close examination of it.

over a surface of several square miles. To form an idea of them, imagine a large net spread before you; the meshes of which are of unequal sizes and of irregular shapes, no two of them resembling each other: consider the thread as representing drains of from 6 to 30 yards in width, and the meshes as representing islands, in many of which are ponds covering from one to six acres of land and having communication with the surrounding waters by drains, or cuts, or openings of one sort or another. Then imagine rows of pollard willow trees planted along the drains, and round the ponds, at regular distances, which being furnished with large round heads, give a very wooded appearance to these fens; and, by excluding all view of the surrounding country and all distant landmarks, add considerably to the difficulty of finding one's way through this labyrinth of drains, and you will thus have before you a tolerably accurate sketch of the french fens or *marais* districts.

Many of the islands in these fens and marshes are in the highest state of cultivation as orchards and vegetables gardens, and clearly demonstrate the vast superiority of spade husbandry over all other modes of cultivating the soil. Nothing can exceed the richness and luxuriance of the crops, they supply the

markets for 30 miles round with superior vegetables, and with a considerable quantity of fruit, consisting of pears, apples, cherries, strawberries, etc., all which must be conveyed out of these islands in their marais boats.

It is a most interesting and picturesque sight to behold their light canoe shaped skiffs heavily laden with all sorts of garden produce gliding in quick succession along these drains with the utmost rapidity, propelled and guided by women, standing in their narrow sterns, who seem only occasionally to touch the bank with their light poles: but such is the expertness and unerring effect of that magical touch that they propel them without making any apparent exertion, and pass each other, in the narrowest places, without slackening their rapid motion, or appearing to dread a collision, which must inevitably prove fatal to their frail barks and rich cargoes.

There are also other islands in the interior of these fens of much greater extent which, being in a swampy and uncultivated state, and covered with thick sedge, present an extremely wild appearance, afford excellent cover for snipes and wildfowl of every description, and are seldom without them.

Many of the ponds also being in very retired

situations, and fringed round with deep borders of luxuriant reeds and bull rushes, are seldom without water fowl : but it is most difficult to flush birds in such positions, so as to obtain shots at them , as they seldom rise perpendicularly, but fly off , along the surface of the water, under the protection of these vegetable ramparts , and thus get beyond the reach of a sportsman before he sees them.

To these haunts the sportsman must proceed by boat, which he can hire for a trifle , and may either have the attendance of one of these water sylphs, or propel it for himself , according to his taste. He will also require a pair of *marais* boots to get through these wet localities with comfort : I have already, in treating of snipe shooting, mentioned where they can be had in great perfection and upon very moderate terms.

Some persons prefer indian rubber to leather for such purposes : no material can more effectually keep out damp than indian rubber; but it appears to me to impart a chilly sensation which is extremely uncomfortable, and to impede the progress of perspiration which should never be checked in exercise; I am therefore disposed to cry out with the currier : *That there is nothing like leather*. At least for *marais* boots.

Several of the duck shooters have huts at their ponds which are built with branches of trees, generally in the form of bee-hives, having an entrance in the rear and an aperture in front commanding the water where the birds are expected to assemble, and carefully thatched over with dry reeds. Others erect fences round the edges of their ponds, raising them to the height of 5 or 6 feet, and darkening them with reeds so that they have the appearance of mats placed edgeways along the sides of the ponds. In these fences they have loop-holes cut at regular distances, commanding different parts of the water.

In either case they await the arrival of successive flights, until they literally cover the surface of the pond, and then cut a lane through them with their huge *canardières* or duck guns.

Those who wish to see a pond admirably arranged with such a surrounding fence, may indulge their curiosity at St.-Omer by paying a visit to Mr Pierre Dewert's pond, in the *marais* of Soubruie : he lives upon the island and supports himself by the sale of the wildfowl he kills during the season.

These huttiers are scattered over the marais districts, and keep the ducks flying from one to another in large squadrons during the night : they get several

successive shots, and often leave the killed and wounded uncollected until morning, when, with the aid of a boat, a small gun and a good dog, they have little difficulty in obtaining possession of them.

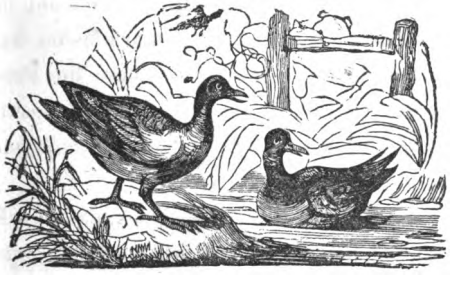
They are usually provided with excellent and most efficient decoy ducks which they attach by the leg to stakes that project a few inches above the water, leaving them at liberty to swim about within certain limits, and to clatter away without any limit whatever.

In very severe weather wild-ducks may be killed in great numbers on the pier of Dunkerque, which extends a considerable distance into the sea, and thereby intercepts numerous large flocks in their progress from their northern habitations to the extensive fens which lie between St-Omer and Dunkerque, and extend a considerable distance towards Cassel.

An acquaintance of mine, who happened to be there in the severe winter of 1844, killed an enormous quantity of them. He concealed himself in the woodwork of the pier, and got splendid shots at them while sweeping over him. As they fell into the sea, he was obliged to hire a boatman to pick them up and, of course, many wounded birds escaped.

The duck shooting is very superior in the Pas-de-

Calais, and all along the coast of Normandy and Britany: also at Peronne, on the Somme. Wherever those *marais* districts exist, they are found in abundance.



The french *marais* ducks are considered of superior quality; and the *pâtés-de-canards* of Amiens have long since acquired a high reputation amongst gastronomists of unquestionable authority: but I confess that I prefer the ducks and drakes of my own country, and think them superior to any I have ever tasted on the continent.

HARE SHOOTING.

CHAPTER VIII.

LE CHASSEUR ÉPICIER.

Having already given a full account of the french hare hunting which is so much confined to woods and forests; it remains to see how the *chasseur* deals with them in the open country and small covers.

All sporting dogs here are trained to set hares, to run them down when wounded, and to fetch them when shot: so they must be considered as forming part of the *chasseur's* general stock in trade, and treated accordingly.

The *chasseur épicier* is however the destroyer *par excellence* of hares. He takes out his *permis de chasse* and rents a small cover as a sort of commercial

speculation, keeps a regular debit and credit account of the expenses and produce of his shooting; and, upon due inspection of his balance sheet, decides whether he shall be a *chasseur épicier*, or an *épicier non chasseur* for the following season.

Every step he takes is governed by the most rigid economy. He never fires random shots; always takes a most deliberate aim, and runs the fewest risks possible.

If you chance to meet him returning from his *chasse réservée*, and inquire what success he has had, he replies in a language peculiar to himself, and gives you the estimated value of his game, in francs and centimes: *sept francs cinquante centimes, comme ça*, which is his mode of considering the question.

When he shoots in his *chasse réservée*, he tries every thicket, every bush, every cluster of briers with the most indefatigable industry: he follows up all the little hare tracks with incredible dexterity and perseverance; and when he at length discovers the object of his search he commits no hasty indiscretion; he carefully examines his gun, his caps, his charges, and anxiously considers the best mode of firing at him. Being frequently obliged to fire at very short distances, he wisely selects the head as the least

useful part in the kitchen, and usually blows it to atoms. The *chasseur épicier* is generally an excellent shot, and can hit a loaf of sugar, or a bunch of short sixes, at 40 yards, with point blank certainty. Nevertheless he occasionally misses a hare at six yards, ten inches. This proceeds from his double anxiety to hit him in the head, and not to hit him elsewhere. Besides the sum at stake being considerable, namely 4 francs 50 centimes, a fair allowance must be made for the agitation occasioned by so great a prize: we know that the very best billiard players often miss their strokes from the magnitude of the sum at stake; and must make due allowance for the *chasseur épicier*, when he accidentally misses a hare lying in his form, at six yards, ten inches.

When the *chasseur épicier* picks up his hare, minus the head, which becomes an evanescent quantity in the calculation, he can, at once, tell its weight to half an ounce: he estimates its value, and settles it in his *carnassière*. He then looks at his watch (a *chasseur épicier* who rents a *chasse réservée*, always wears a watch), and sets off for town in the highest exultation.

It is a very comfortable thing to have hares in a *chasse réservée* within half an hour's walk of the town;

but it is still more satisfactory to have them in one's *carnassière*, out of the reach of the *braconniers;* a *chasseur épicier* is quite of that opinion.

It would delight you to see the air of triumph with which he proceeds to town with a hare in his *carnassière.* You may perhaps have discovered in your rambles that an empty *carnassière* is much the heaviest to carry: it is for ever knocking against something it should not knock against, but only put a hare in it, and it lies exactly where it should, and you hardly feel it on your back. Thus, away he trudges to town, in the confident expectation that Madame will have the *bouilli* ready for him on his arrival; but, being a man of business, he never touches a morsel until he first despatches the hare, minus the head, to Madame Fairechoses, the pastry-cook, kindly offering her a preference at 5 francs, but authorizing the servant to leave it at 4 francs 50 centimes, if she cannot obtain more. Then down he sits to the *bouilli;* and if Madame Fairechoses declines his liberal offer, he simply enters the hare in his debit and credit account for home consumption, at 3 francs, being its value in use as distinguished from its value in exchange.

The *chasseur épicier* is always a *bon vivant;*

but likes to have his good things *à bon marché.*

The *chasseur épicier* sometimes shoots in the open country where he has numerous competitors, and many disadvantages to encounter: he is fully aware of the injurious effects of competition, and understands perfectly well that it diminishes his chance of a hare, just as it reduces the price of his candles and *cassonade;* and therefore, he exerts all his ingenuity to overreach his antagonist. He has some excellent dodges for the purpose: he knows that a hare always prefers running up to running down a hill, and he therefore keeps on the rising ground. Whenever he can gain that advantage, he comes in for a shot, and laughs at the gentleman in the valley: he also knows how to aim at a hare in all possible positions; for instance, if running straight from him, he never fires at his rump, as a London cockney would: no, no; he has carved too many hares to be ignorant of the impenetrable shield of bones by which a hare is protected in that quarter; he therefore aims between his ears. If running straight to him, he aims rather low, just between his forefeet; and, in case he misses him with one barrel, which seldom happens, he is certain of a fair shot with the other: when, as the hare generally runs at the top of his speed, he aims

at his head, or a little in advance of his nose, according to the rate of his motion, and his distance from him.

The *chasseur épicier* is, in truth, a first rate hand at shooting a hare, and inferior to nobody in turning it to the best account. If he sees a hare stealing into a patch of clover or potatoes, he does not, after the manner of some hasty young gentlemen, proceed at once to the spot, to try for him. The *chasseur épicier* knows very well that a hare, under such circumstances, is always on the watch, and perfectly unapproachable. The course he adopts on such occasions is unquestionably the best: he goes off in a different direction, and looks for other game; and, after an hour or two, returns to the clover, singing, if he knows how, and whistling, if he does not. The hare, hearing the noise, crouches as close as possible, and never stirs until kicked out of his form.

It appears to be universally admitted that no greater calamity awaits poor puss than a fall of snow, and the *chasseurs épiciers* take every possible advantage of it; they are off at day-break hare tracing in all parts of the country, and generally return heavily laden.

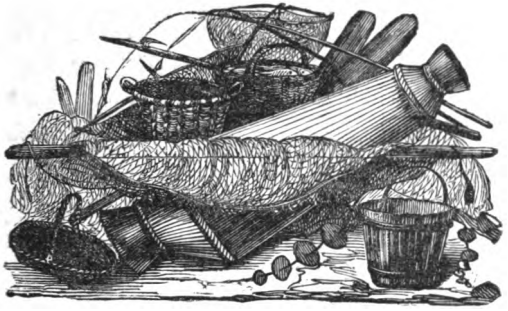
One of this diligent and persevering class met with

a curious adventure sometime since on the Pyrenees: having wounded a hare, it kicked and tumbled about until, at length, it commenced rolling down the side of the mountain: the snow attached itself to the hare as it rolled down; and, by the time it reached the valley, it was in the centre of an immense body of snow, moving on with the rapidity of an avalanche, and overturning every thing that lay in its course: there never was a more mischievous hare.

To distinguish a young hare from an old one, feel the knee joint of the forefoot; if the joint is compact, and no interval between the bones that form it, the hare is an old one; but if, on the contrary, the separation of the two bones is perceptible to the touch, the hare is young.

PART THIRD.

ON FISHING.



CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

The french fishing may be advantageously considered under three distinct heads; namely : 1° Trout fishing; 2° Pike and perch fishing; 3° Bleak, roach and gudgeon fishing.

In treating of each, I shall explain how the native artist, and those who frequent the french rivers fish, and then point out the best fishing stations in that part of France which lies along the coast from Dun-

kerque to Brest, including the north of France, Picardy, Normandy and Britany, all which is within the reach of the british angler at a very trifling amount either of inconvenience or expense.

With this information before him, the british angler can have no difficulty in determining what course he should pursue, if disposed to visit the continent; and I can confidently assure him that he will have no cause to regret his excursion, provided he goes at once to a good fishing station, and does not waste his time at indifferent streams, where a never ending train of indefatigable fishermen have flogged the fish into such a state of alarm, that they scarcely venture to take a natural fly, lest it might prove an artificial one: yet such are the streams usually selected by the ill advised british anglers who visit the coast of France, where it is extremely difficult to obtain local information on such matters.

The foregoing classification will, I trust, be found satisfactory and sufficiently comprehensive for all fishing purposes. Who, for example, would waste his precious time in searching for carp, tench, bream or eels, or such like plebeian fish, when he can have good trout fishing, catch a lumbering pike of ten pounds weight, or fill his *panier* with merry bleak and

gudgeon? Such proceedings are only fit for the phlegmatic *bourgeois*, who, patiently, sits for an entire day, under the scorching rays of a summer sun, watching his huge bobbing float in the humble expectation of getting a greasy bream for his supper. I shall therefore, with becoming liberality, make a genteel present of the carp, tench, bream, eels and sticklebacks to these unambitious artists, being fully persuaded that they will catch, cook and devour them with the utmost avidity.

I have often met them, returning from a successful day's sport with dozens of small fry stowed away in their capacious pockets, as contented and happy as the cheering prospect of *la bonne friture* could make them; and have no doubt they will give up all claim to the trout, and trout streams, in return for my kindness and consideration.

In pointing out the most desirable fishing stations on those rivers which best deserve the angler's notice in the several departments of the Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Seine-Inférieure, Eure, Calvados, Orne, Manche, Ille-et-Vilaine, Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Morbihan and Loire-Inférieure. I shall content myself with conducting him to such localities as command the best fishing in each department, leaving him to

extend his rambles according to his own taste and leisure.

Many of these departments are so intersected by streams and rivulets, most of which contain trout, and afford excellent fishing (particularly in Britany), that it would be an endless task to enumerate them. In the comparatively small department of Finistère, there are above 300!

The angler will therefore, in passing from one fishing station to another, find a great variety of streams and rivulets, which, being the feeders and tributaries of extensive rivers, abound with fish, and merit his attention, but which cannot be noticed in this little work.

TROUT FISHING.

CHAPTER II.

LA TRUITE : THE TROUT.

Now let the fisherman his toils prepare,
And arm himself with every watery snare:
His hooks, his lines, peruse with careful eye,
Increase his tackle, and his rod re-tye.

GAY'S RURAL SPORTS.

In fishing the french rivers, anglers employ the minnow, the artificial fly, the natural fly, or the worm, according to circumstances ; but trolling with a minnow or a small gudgeon is the favourite, and most successful mode of fishing these waters.

When an angler has to deal with a deep, sluggish river, stealing on almost imperceptibly through a level country, passing over a loose soil, abounding with weeds, and much encumbered with branching

willows, planted at short intervals along its crumbling banks, his flies are useless: the finest tackle would be too visible on its glassy surface, and the greatest manual dexterity of no avail. He must, in such localities, take the minnow, the worm, or the natural fly, or go without fish; he has no other alternative.

When, on the contrary, he meets with rapid streams, gliding over gravelly and pebbly bottoms, and of moderate depth, the enthusiastic angler will, no doubt, prefer his flies, and dexterous cast, to all other modes of fishing; and by proceeding to well selected localities, he will, upon most of these rivers, find suitable streams, and no obstruction in the enjoyment of his favourite sport.

We shall now see how the French anglers proceed in fishing these rivers, whether they employ the minnow, the fly, or the worm.

Minnow fishing.

The french mode of trolling with a minnow differs very essentially from what our anglers denominate "spinning a minnow." It requires little dexterity, and is perhaps better suited to these deep sluggish rivers where the minnow and worm are chiefly employed.

The tackle too is much simpler, and deserves notice: It consists of a double hook (that is two hooks tied back to back), at the extremity of a strong piece of gut, and two more similarly united lashed on the same gut, a little (say an inch) higher up, with a single hook also on the same gut, at the length of a moderate sized minnow from the lowest pair of hooks. A small bit of lead is attached to the single hook, by a thread of sufficient length, to admit of its being introduced into the mouth of the minnow, and passed into its stomach, while the hook is fastened in its lips, and retains it in that position.

The minnow is thus put upon the tackle.

One of the lowest pair of hooks is fixed firmly in the flesh of the minnow, a little above its tail, leaving the other projecting to strike the fish: one of the next pair of hooks is, in like manner, fixed in the side of the minnow, high enough up towards its back to fasten it firmly, leaving the other projecting to strike the fish: the lead is introduced into its mouth, and passed into its stomach, and the single hook is afterwards passed through the lips of the minnow (introducing it underneath, and passing it out through the upper lip). Thus, this tackle presents three hooks ready to strike the fish: the other two being entirely

sunk in the bait. The lead is necessary, to sink the minnow with sufficient rapidity, and to overcome the resistance of the current in so doing.*

Having thus arranged the tackle and bait, they drop the minnow into the water as gently as possible, allow it to sink to the bottom, or nearly so; and then hold it against the stream so as to make it represent a fish struggling to get on against the current, which is accomplished by a slight motion of the wrist; or else, when it reaches the bottom, they draw it quickly against the stream: it is then allowed to sink a second time, and reaches its destination a little higher up the stream from whence it is again drawn up in the same manner, and so on until some hungry trout springs at it from the bank, where they usually lie. Thus the river is fished *up the stream*. Others fish down the stream, allowing the minnow to travel on with it, and occasionally draw-

* This bit of lead is generally about an inch in length, nicely rounded, with an eye at one extremity through which the thread passes, and the other bluntly pointed. It is just large enough to fit into the mouth of the minnow. The troller should be provided with several of different sizes to suit the different sized minnows he may occasionally employ.

ing it against the current, or casting it to the opposite side, and working it across the stream.

Most trollers have some peculiar system of their own, which they, of course, insist is the *ne plus ultra*, of minnow fishing, but the truth is that, when a trout is so disposed, he will take the minnow in whatever form it may be presented to him, *provided he does not see the fisherman;* and when he is not on the feed, no dexterity can move or tempt him.

When a trout runs at the minnow, the French troller immediately strikes him (which is effected by a slight twitch of the wrist), and he usually succeeds in fastening some of the hooks in his lip.

The victim is not allowed much time to exhaust his strength, but is dragged at once in all imaginable haste to the most convenient landing place, and forced into a net without further ceremony, or held against the stream, with his nose out of the water, until a landing net is brought up behind him, when he is allowed to glide into it tail foremost, with the current.

This may appear rather a perilous mode of proceeding to those anglers who are accustomed to employ the finest tackle, and who delight in killing their fish secundum artem.

But when the nature of these weedy localities, where the minnow is commonly employed, is fairly taken into account, they may be induced to increase the strength of their tackle, and to deal less ceremoniously with their fish.

Fly fishing.

The next method, namely fly fishing, is usually adopted by all anglers wherever there is a suitable stream for the purpose, and some of the native artists are the most singular fly fishers imaginable.

They generally take their clumsy rods in both hands, and flog away as if they were beating water-rats out of the river; or hunting small fish into a net. Their tackle too is of a very rustic nature: it usually consists of a coarse line and a few pieces of gut rudely fastened together; and their flies, if I can call them flies, resemble nothing you have ever seen constructed for fishing purposes.

It would puzzle the most erudite entomologist to determine what class of insects they were intended to represent.

I have counted above a dozen hooks in the body of what one of these native artists informed me was, intended for a *hanneton*, or cock-chafer; at the same

time assuring me that it was a most destructive fly, and that no trout on the feed would ever refuse so great a delicacy. A trout is certainly a very voracious fish; and its taking a mouthful of fishing hooks presented, in so clumsy a shape, appears to be a tolerably clear proof of the fact, if we wanted any.

However, notwithstanding the success that these curious and clumsy devices sometimes procure for the native artist, I must recommend the british angler to provide himself with a fair supply of Limerick, or London built flies, before he sets out on his rambles.

Chevalier, of Bell yard, Temple Bar, London, appears to be the favourite with most of the anglers I have conversed with on the subject; and he has, for some years, supplied me with very excellent rods, flies, and tackle, of every description.

Those who visit the french rivers should be provided with the following flies, which they will find very generally useful.

The may fly.
— *yellow dun.*
— *blue dun.*
— *coachman.*
— *black gnat.*

The red palmer ribbed with gold
— vermilion palmer.
— march brown.
— grouse hackle.
— black hackle.
— willow fly.

All flies with dark bodies, and light coloured wings will be found killing on the french rivers; and, as a general rule, they should be mounted on hooks full a size smaller than those in common use in the fishing tackles ware-houses, in London, for these flies.

All anglers know the vast superiority of hair lines over those made of the mixed materials now in common use in England; yet few will condescend to make their own lines, though it would be found an easy and amusing task, and might be occasionally taken up without interrupting the conversation of a domestic circle.

To show what may be accomplished in this way, I may be allowed to mention that, in the winter of 1844, I made an excellent pike line, composed of 24 hairs in thickness, and of 100 yards in length; and a trout line, composed of 12 hairs in thickness, and of 75 yards in length, merely taking them up when not

disposed to do anything else, without once feeling that I was working out a tedious or troublesome task.

Having shown M. Cuvillier,* from whom I purchased my hair, how to make them, he immediately took up the business, made several very beautiful lines, and can now supply any gentleman, who wishes to obtain one, with a very first rate article on reasonable terms.

Dibbing with a may fly.

The third method, namely dibbing with the natural may fly, is only available during that most destructive season, when the may fly is upon the water, and then the largest trout may be easily taken by this method.

The best hook for this sort of fishing is nº 8.

As the following instructions, given by Isaac Walton, in his inestimable book on fishing, page 280, cannot be exceeded, I submit them to my reader, as the best he can receive.

" Having gathered great store of them into a long " draw box, with holes in the cover to give them

* Mr Cuvillier, 27, rue de Dunkerque, St-Omer.

" air, we take them out thence by the wings, and " bait them thus upon the hook. We first take one " (for we commonly fish with two of them at a time), " and putting the point of the hook into the thickest " part of his body, under one of his wings, run it " directly through and out at the other side, leaving " him spitted across upon the hook; and then taking " the other, put him on after the same manner; but " with his head the contrary way; in which posture " they will live upon the hook and play with their " wings for a quarter of an hour, or more. But you " must have a care to keep their wings dry both from " the water, and also that your fingers be not wet " when you take them out to bait them, for then " your bait is spoiled."

Those who fish in this manner watch until they find a trout on the feed, and then drop the flies gently on the stream, a little above the trout, allowing them to float down and to pass over the spot where he lies, without permitting any of the line to trail upon the water, as, in such case, the trout, particularly if an old one, is likely to detect the tackle and to decline the compliment.

If neatly done, and that the angler keeps himself quite out of sight, the bait is usually very freely taken,

and the fish well hooked. A long rod is very useful on these occasions, as, without one, it is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to prevent the line from trailing in the water which seldom fails to scare a cautious fish.

Some anglers on these rivers have a beautiful method of casting a fly over a trout on the opposite side of a stream, and effect their purpose with the most astonishing precision.

When this method is adopted with the natural fly, it must be put on the hook in a different and firmer manner, which is done by passing the hook into the fly just behind the head, and bringing it down through the body to the tail, in the same manner as a worm is put upon a hook. This being arranged, the angler takes the rod in his right hand, and the line, about six inches above the bait, between the finger and thumb of the left hand; and then, by extending his right hand forward and his left hand back in the opposite direction, he bends the rod into a circular bow, the *plane* of which cuts the horizon at right angles; and, by suddenly letting the line go, the rod springs into its place and casts the fly with indescribable lightness and precision on the desired spot: it really falls like a feather.

It requires considerable practice and much dexterity to accomplish this with unerring certainty. Some young anglers commence the operation by catching their own thumbs, which is by no means an agreeable sort of thing, especially with the spring and pressure of a fly rod, to fasten the hook in its hold.

Worm fishing.

Those who use a worm as bait for trout, either fish with or without a float. In deep and sluggish rivers, a float will be found necessary; in shallow streams it is better not have one.

To fish with a float, cut off about an inch of the barrel of an ordinary goose quill, and about an inch and a half of the solid part, of sufficient thickness to fit exactly in the barrel. When you mount your tackle, and before you attach the gut to your line, slip the line through the barrel part of the quill, and then put in the solid bit to hold it on. When all is ready, pull out the solid bit, move your float down to any part of the gut you think proper, and fasten it there firmly by again introducing it. It will also be necesssary to have a few grains of small shot on the tackle, to sink the worm

notwithstanding the resistance of the current, which always has a strong tendency to force it to the surface of the water, or to carry it down the stream before it sinks low enough to be seen by the fish. Then cast the worm as far up the stream as possible, and allow it to descend with the current until drawn near the surface by the tension of the line, when it must be taken up, and again cast up the stream in a similar manner, and so on, passing it thus, through the most suitable parts of the river, for such fishing.

In fishing without a float in shallow streams, allow the worm to run along the bottom, not quite so fast as the current, and send it thus into nice rippling streams, in which the trout are lying, watching everything that comes down, and they generally take the worm with great avidity, when disposed to feed.

It is a matter of considerable importance to make a judicious selection of worms, and to have them in proper condition for fishing, which can only be attained by keeping them until they are cleansed and scoured, when they become firm and much more lively on the hook.

Walton recommends putting the lob, or dew-worm, into water for a night, and the brandling for an hour only, and then putting them into a bag with

fennel, when required for immediate use; but, if for future use, the best mode of keeping them is in an earthen pot with plenty of moss, which should be well washed and have the water wrung from it; the moss should be washed every three or four days in summer, and once a week in winter.

Walton tells us that: "For the trout, the dew "worm, which some also call the lob-worm, and "the brandling, are the chief; and especially the "first for a great trout, and the latter for a less."

There is also a small red worm, usually found under cow-dung in pasture land, which is excellent for trout fishing.

The principal thing to be attended to, in baiting with a worm, is so to manage that no part of the hook, or arming, remains visible. The worm should cover the entire, and appear to be merely on the gut.

Walton gives the following excellent directions for baiting with a worm, when we fish without a float, as already described: "Suppose it be a big "lob-worm: put your hook into him somewhat "above the middle, and out again a little below "the middle: having so done, draw your worm "above the arming of your hook; but note, that "at the entering of your hook, it must not be at the

" head end of the worm, but at the tail end of him,
" that the point of your hook may come out towards
" the head-end; and, having drawn him above the
" arming of your hook, then put the point of your
" hook again into the very head of the worm, till it
" comes near to the place where the point of the
" hook first came out, and then draw back that part
" of the worm that was above the shank or arming
" of your hook, and so fish with it, and it will run on
" the ground without tangling, "

It is scarcely necessary to mention, though it cannot be too strongly impressed upon the mind of the young angler, that no matter what bait he employs, or how tempting it may be, he must exert all his skill and dexterity to keep himself *out of sight of the fish;* it being an indisputable fact that the most voracious fish will sometimes retire when he sees the angler, and no timid fish will ever take a bait under such circumstances.

LOCAL INFORMATION.

Pas-de-Calais.

The angler who visits the north of France should proceed at once to St.-Pol,* 31 miles from St.-Omer, on the river *Ternoise*, and fish from thence down the stream to its junction with the river *Canche*, a little below the picturesque town of Hesdin, which is 18 miles, by the river, and 12 ½ miles, by the road,

* All distances in this work are given in english miles. Those on the french roads are given in kilomètres; and a table will be found in the appendix, by which any number of kilomètres may be at once converted into english miles. The fare in the diligence from Calais to St.-Omer, is 5 francs, and from St.-Omer to St.-Pol, in the Paris diligence, 7 francs 25 centimes. Neither the conducteur, or coachman, have any claim on travellers; their demand is included in the fare. Thus the whole from Calais to St.-Pol, 56 miles, is under 10 sh of our money. A one horse carriage, sufficient to accommodate 3 persons, with the driver, may be hired at St.-Omer for 8 francs per day, and a franc a day to the driver who provides for himself and his horse en route. A party would find such a conveyance in constant attendance upon them very useful.

from St.-Pol. He should then fish the upper waters of the *Canche*, between Hesdin and Frevent (a distance of 13 miles), where he may take the diligence and proceed to Fauquembergues, if not disposed to fish the *Canche*, below Hesdin.

If, however, he descends the *Canche*, from Hesdin to Montreuil, a distance of 13 1/2 miles, he will find a noble river in which there are some enormous trout; but, the best fishing on this line, will be had in its tributary streams: he will meet with one at Contes, and another at Beaurainville, both which are excellent.

After having fished the *Ternoise* and the *Canche*, the angler should proceed to Fauquembergues on the river *Aa*, which abounds with small trout. To fish the upper waters of this river, he should go to Renty, 2 1/2 miles above Fauquembergues: there (a little below the village), the stream flows over a gravelly and pebbly bottom and passes through an extensive tract of meadow land, forming a succession of streams, and pools of first rate fishing character, where the angler will meet with no obstruction whatever in fly fishing. He may also proceed up the river for several miles above Renty, where he may have excellent sport.

From Fauquembergues, the angler may very conveniently visit the river *Lys*, for which purpose he should proceed to Coyecque, (a distance of about 4 miles), and fish from thence to Thérouanne, which is the best part of the river.

The scenery is also highly interesting, but not so wild, or picturesque, as that on the *Ternoise*, the *Canche* and the *Aa*. He should return to Fauquembergues from the *Lys*, and descend the *Aa* from thence to the village of Arques, within 20 minutes walk of St-Omer.

In descending the river *Aa*, from Fauquembergues to Arques, the angler will, at St-Liévin, Wavrans and Lumbres, find favourite localities which afford excellent streams, both for the fly and the minnow,* and abound with fish.

Between Lumbres and St-Omer the water is better for minnow, than for fly fishing, and the trout are much larger, but not so numerous. I have taken some over 3 pound weight in the immediate vicinity of St-Omer.

* As minnows may be taken in great abundance in the *Canche* and the *Aa*, a small silk casting net will be found exceedingly useful, and the angler should be provided with one.

There are, however, several nice streams fed by the escape water, from the numerous mills on this part of the river.

There is some tolerable trout fishing in the *Liane*, *St.-Louis* and *Slack*, all within convenient distances of Boulogne-sur-Mer (where very excellent english fishing tackle may be purchased at a reasonable rate). Those who wish to try the *Liane* should proceed to Henneveux, on one of its small feeders, near the village of Longueville, on the St-Omer road, and fish down the stream.

To fish the *St.-Louis*, they should go to Licques, much in the same neighbourhood, and fish down the stream to Tournehem, below which this river is partially preserved.

To fish the *Slack*, they should go to Marquise, on the Calais road.

The inhabitants of the Pas-de-Calais are a moral, well conducted and most industrious people, naturally credulous and confiding. They are passionately fond of certain favourite games, principally shooting with the cross-bow, and playing at bowls. They are also great florists, and have their flower shows in almost every commune. The amateurs of each class form societies, in their respective communes, and

have their regular *fêtes* which they celebrate with much solemnity. At these *fêtes*, the most distinguished member is elected president, and holds his honorary rank until there is a new election.

Those who feel much interest in such matters should visit the village of Courset, about 12 miles from Boulogne, where there is a very splendid botanical garden which, for the luxuriance and beauty of its plants, is not excelled by anything of the sort in France.

Should the angler feel disposed to extend his rambles and obtain some very superior fishing, at a moderate expense, he should, after fishing the *Ternoise*, the *Canche*, the *Lys*, and the *Aa*, proceed to Commercy on the *Meuse* which is but a short distance from Toul on the *Moselle*, both which are first rate fishing stations; and though he may occasionally have the gratification of hooking a salmon in these noble rivers, I cannot promise him such sport as the *angler in Ireland* describes in his entertaining work, in which he tells us that, while passing from one pool to another with his rod over his shoulder, and his flies floating in the breeze, he accidentally hooked an enormous salmon! nor can I, even upon such very high authority, venture to recommend that style of

fishing for the *Meuse* and *Moselle*: In fact it is too Irish for any other country, and perhaps might not succeed elsewhere.

The valleys of the *Meuse* are full of wild and interesting scenery, which will amply repay the tourist for his excursion.

One of the most picturesque points is above Dinant, at the chateau de Freye, where the steep hills are wooded to the water's edge, and the craggy rocks rise perpendicularly, and to a considerable height, from the bed of its rapid stream.

Picardy.

The province of Picardy consisted of the department of the Somme, part of the department of Aisne and a small portion of the Pas-de-Calais.

Having already pointed out the best fishing stations in the Pas-de-Calais, we shall now proceed to those in the department of the Somme, and that part of Aisne, under the denomination of Picardy.

The Somme.

The angler who visits this department may have excellent fishing in the *Celle*, *Noye* and *Avre* which

pour their tributary streams into the river *Somme*, at, and near, the ancient city of Amiens.

To fish the *Avre*, and its tributary the *Noye*, he should proceed to Moreuil, on the *Avre*, which is 14 miles from Amiens, and 5 miles from Ailly-sur-Noye, and commands the best parts of both rivers.

To fish the *Celle*, he should proceed to Conty, which is 13 miles from Amiens, and fish down the stream. He may also obtain very good fishing in the *Encre* which flows into the river *Somme*, a little below Corbie, about 6 miles above Amiens.

To fish the *Encre*, he should proceed to Albert, which is 10 miles from its junction with the *Somme*, and fish down the stream. At Albert the *Encre* is most ingeniously turned over an artificially constructed rock, and forms a very beautifnl cascade. There are some very large trout in the river *Somme*, but few moderate sized fish, as it is stocked with pike from the vast lakes and *marais* ponds at Péronne through which it unfortunately flows.

To obtain any trout fishing worth having in the *Somme*, it is necessary to proceed to St-Quentin in the department of Aisne; but it is not considered a good fishing station.

The *Authie* which separates this department from

the Pas-de-Calais is said to contain some enormous fish, but offers little inducement to the angler, and scarcely deserves a visit.

Those who wish to try it should go to Doulens which is only 15 miles from Amiens.

There is a singular natural curiosity near the village of Gezaincourt in the immediate neighbourhood of Doulens. It consists of a water spout which gushes forth from the side of a hill, named *le pied de bœuf*, and which rises in separate branches, and produces a strange noise in falling, which is no doubt caused by the numerous echoes, in the subterraneous passage which receives, and carries off the water.

The peasants believe that this water spout rises and falls with the price of corn; and often attend at the *pied de bœuf* to ascertain the state of the markets.

It is said that this department contains more paupers than any other in France. The beggars at Amiens are proverbially importunate: they frequently obtrude themselves into the houses of the inhabitants in urging their demands; and when they fasten upon travellers in the streets, seldom quit until they extort some relief. They adopt begging as a profession, and bring up their children to it,

in preference to giving them any industrious occupation.*

Nothing can exceed the fertility of the soil about Amiens and Montdidier; but the farmers appear to have introduced a portion of the Tipperary agrarian code, into these rich districts; and maintain themselves in possession, by a most disgraceful system of combination and outrage. No person is allowed to take a lease of lands which the occupant wishes to retain; and any person venturing to do so is denominated a *dépointeur*, and dealt with in a very summary manner, as a french writer tells us: *Ils sont punis de leur hardiesse par le fer ou le feu.* Burnings, murders and assassinations are the ordinary means of gratifying their revengeful feelings.

But when not acting under any excitement, they are a kind and generous people, very social in their habits, but rather too fond of the *cabaret*, and its deteriorating tipple.

Amiens is remarkable for its extensive linen and woolen cloth manufactures which afford employment to upwards of 30,000 people, and also for its magnificent cathedral, the nave of

* *Histoire d'Amiens,* par M. Dusevil, t. 2, p. 485.

which is considered the most beautiful in France.

Normandy.

The province of Normandy consisted of the departments of the Seine-Inférieure, Eure, Calvados, Manche and Orne, which we shall now proceed to examine.

Seine-Inférieure.

In this department the angler will find excellent fishing in the rivers *Eaulne*, *Béthune*, *Arques*, *Scie*, *Vienne* and *Saare*, all of which abound with trout.

The *Eaulne*, *Béthune* and *Arques* pour their united streams into the sea at Dieppe. They may all be conveniently fished from the village of Arques; but the angler should ascend the *Béthune* to Neufchatel which is a very favourite and superior fishing station.

The *Scie* may also be fished from Arques. To fish the *Vienne* and *Saane*, the angler should proceed to Guerres, a little above the confluence of these streams, and about 7 miles from Arques.

The *Seine* is too large, and too much disturbed by navigation, to afford much fishing; and it has no tributaries in this department recommendable for fishing purposes.

This is one of the most fertile and best cultivated departments in France, and is full of picturesque and interesting scenery.

A vast number of fine cattle are fed upon its rich pastures, and the banks of the *Seine* produce a considerable quantity of very superior hay. The villages present a strikingly uniform appearance. They consist of a few houses, grouped round a church, inhabited by the pastor, publican, a few shopkeepers and the village smith. Very few of the farmers, or agriculturists, reside in these villages.

The country seats are all surrounded by dense woods of full grown trees; and the farm houses, by trees in hedge rows, and living fences of one sort or another, all which give the country a wooded and interesting appearance.

The inhabitants are remarkable for great industry and extreme cleanliness, and for having their houses neatly and appropriately furnished.

The Eure.

Those who visit this department should proceed to Bernay, on the *Charentonne*, and fish it down to its junction with the *Rille*; and fish the *Rille* from

thence to Pont-Audemer. These rivers abound with superior fish.

Bernay is remarkable for its great horse-fair, which commences on the 15th of march, and lasts for four successive days: it is attended by upwards of 50,000 people, including a vast number of english-horse dealers. The highest priced norman horses, sold at Bernay, usually fetch about 3,000 francs, or L. 120 of our money.

Pont-Audemer is situated on the left bank of the *Rille* which flows through its *fossés*, where fine trout are occasionally killed.

Nothing can exceed the richness and fertility of this district and the valleys of the *Rille*. The finest grass fed-oxen in France are fattened here, and sold at Poissy for the supply of Paris. The farms are well enclosed: the fences consist of hedges and fine hedge-row timber-trees, which contribute much to the beauty of this delightful country.

The rural habitations are generally built in low situations, and covered with vines and shrubs. They are very neatly kept; but, being ill-ventilated, are often damp and unwholesome.

After having fished the *Charentonne* and the *Rille*, the angler may proceed to Evreux, which is the

chief town of the department : It is delightfully situated in a rich vale, on the rapid and transparent waters of the *Iton*, which is a considerable stream, and may be fished, from thence, to its junction with the *Eure*, and for many miles above the town.

To fish the *Eure*, he may cross over from Evreux to Pacy, and proceed up the stream, as the *Eure* is navigable from Pacy to its junction with the *Seine*.

Most tourists at Evreux visit the chateau of Navarre, where the empress Joséphine resided after her divorce, and acquired such well merited popularity.

Calvados.

There is excellent fishing in this department in the rivers *Toucques*, *Dives*, *Orne*, *Seule*, *Aure* and *Esques*.

To fish the *Toucques*, the angler should proceed to Lizieux, and fish both the *Toucques* and its feeder, the *Orbec*, above the town, as the *Toucques* is navigable from thence to the sea.

To fish the *Dives*, he should proceed to Pierre-sur-Dives, and fish it, and its numerous tributaries, down to Troarn, below which it is navigable.

To fish the *Orne*, he should proceed to Pont-d'Ouilly

(or to Ecouché in the department of Orne), where he may obtain excellent fishing.

To fish the *Seule* and *Aure* and its tributaries, he should proceed to Bayeux, which commands these rivers.

To fish the *Esques*, he should proceed to Trevières, which commands the best parts of this river and its tributary streams, which are excellent.

In this department, the rocks of Calvados, from whence it derives its name, are worthy of notice: They extend for upwards of 13 miles along the coast, and afford good sea fishing, and abundance of lobsters and shell fish. There are above 200 oyster-beds formed at the mouth of the *Seule*, which receive an annual supply of 25 millions of oysters from the rade de Cancale.

At Bayeux the cathedral deserves a visit: it contains a curious and celebrated piece of tapestry representing the conquest of England by William the conqueror, which is said to have been worked by his wife Matilda.

Manche.

This department will afford the angler abundance of sport.

The rivers *Vire*, *Sienne*, *Soulle*, *Thar*, *Sées*, *Sélune*, *Douves* and their respective tributaries are full of fish of superior quality.

To fish the *Vire*, he should proceed to St-Lo, and fish up the stream, as this river is navigable from St-Lo to the sea.

To fish the *Sienne* and *Soulle*, he should proceed to Coutances which commands both these streams. At the village of Agon, near the mouth of the river *Sienne*, there is an extensive piece of water containing enormous carp and eels.

To fish the *Thar*, he should proceed to La Haye, which is not far from the upper waters of the *Sienne*, and might be visited from them.

To fish the *Sées*, he should proceed to Avranches, and ascend the stream as the *Sées* is navigable from thence to the sea.

To fish the *Sélune*, he should proceed to St-Hilaire, and fish down the stream and its tributaries which are excellent. The angler will occasionally hook a salmon in this river.

To fish the *Douves* and its tributaries, he should proceed to *Valognes* which commands the best parts of these rivers.

This department derives its name from its geograph-

ical position, extending, as it does, into that part of the sea so denominated. Its surface is rather level and its soil sandy; but the land is exceedingly well cultivated and extremely productive.

Its extensive pastures are more employed in rearing than in finishing cattle, and the farmers of Calvados purchase them in vast numbers at the fairs of Folligny and Carentan, and fatten them in their rich pastures for the Rouen and Paris markets.

Those who require servants attend certain fairs throughout this country, where there is, what is called the *louerie de domestiques*, and select such as may suit them. It is often exceedingly difficult to procure servants in Normandy. A friend of mine assured me that he was obliged to make up and attend a pair of horses for six weeks, not being able to procure a servant to whom he could entrust them.

Avranches is situated on the river *Sées*, in an extremely interesting and picturesque country, and is celebrated for its cider and the cultivation of fruit trees. It is much frequented by the English, and is considered an agreeable and healthy residence.

There are two magnificent promenades at Avranches, *le Jardin des Plantes* and *le Jardin de l'Évêché*.

The former is abundantly supplied with trees, plants and shrubs, and in the latter there is a fine white marble statue of General Valhubert who was a native of Avranches, and fell at the battle of Austerlitz. The head of this statue is considered a master-piece of sculpture.

Mont-St-Michel, which is only 4 leagues from Avranches, deserves notice. It stands on a rock, and is surrounded by the sea when the tide is in. It is one of the most celebrated places in Normandy. It is conceived that the Celts had a Druidesses' college there, before the arrival of the Romans. In 708, Aubert, bishop of Avranches, founded a small church on the mount, and dedicated it to St-Michel. Some holy relics were then deposited there, and it speedily became a place of great sanctity, and was visited by royal pilgrims from the remotest parts of Europe. Louis 11th visited it with a very numerous suite, and made an offering of 600 écus d'or to the saint; and, on the first of August 1469, instituted the order of St-Michel.

After the dispersion of the monks, at the commencement of the 1st revolution, Mont-St-Michel became a state prison, and was filled with nobles and priests; and it has since retained that character. Lecarpen-

tier who was condemned in 1820, for having returned to the country, died there in 1829.

This establishment is well regulated: it affords extensive workshops for such mechanics as are confined within its walls, of whom, between 6 and 700 are usually thus usefully employed at their respective trades.

On the night of the 22d october 1834, an extensive fire broke out in the prison, which the prisoners assisted in extinguishing, and none of them attempted to escape.

It appears, from authentic surveys and plans of Mont-St-Michel, that the rock, on which it stands, is upwards of 900 yards in circumference, and that the elevation of the surface of the rock, above the level of the surrounding strand, is 180 feet. The steeple is 400 feet above the strand. It is completely enclosed on the northern and western sides, and there are several houses on the southern and eastern sides, with small gardens (artificially constructed on the rock) attached to them, and also a small church.

The inhabitants are chiefly fishermen, and take turbot, salmon, and sea fish of various sorts in great abundance. The women and children collect shell fish on the strand which covers several square leagues, and is extremely dangerous.

The only safe approach to Mont-St-Michel is from Ardevon, where guides may be obtained, and from whence there is a safe road when the tide is out.

Those who find themselves in the neighbourhood of Cherbourg should visit its museum which contains an excellent gallery of pictures, collected at the expense of a spirited individual, Mr Henri, a native of Cherbourg. They will there find, 32 pictures of the italian school, 7 of the spanish school, and 51 of the flemish and dutch painters; also a public library, and a cabinet of antiquities and of natural history. There is also a model-farm at Flamanville, not far from Cherbourg, which deserves a visit: it belongs to Mr le comte Donatier de Sesmaisons: some tourists may like to see it.

Coutances is a very ancient town: its antique cathedral is a curious monument of gothic architecture; its steeples serve as landmarks for navigators, and are seen at a very considerable distance. It is one of the handsomest churches in the kingdom.

Laulne, which is 13 ½ miles from Coutances, is frequently visited by tourists for the purpose of seeing the curious piece of tapestry which Molière has rendered so celebrated. It may be seen at the

chateau of Laulne in perfect preservation, and affords a just idea of the costumes of the 15th century; each subject is explained by a stanza of four verses, in rather a free and unreserved style.

St-Hilaire is a very commercial town. Some merchants there carry on a very lucrative trafic in human hair. It is both a sad and a ludicrous spectacle to behold them, in the market-place, with large bags by their sides, bargaining with the poor peasant girls for their beautiful hair, running their fingers through it, and pulling it about, as if they were examining a sample of wool, or flax; and, when the slow bargain is at length concluded, coolly taking out a huge pair of shears, clipping it off, and tossing it into their large sacks; and then paying the poor shorn victims who receive the stipulated price, and depart with the utmost composure!

The Orne.

This beautiful and picturesque department is traversed, from east to west, by a chain of mountains of moderate elevation, most of which are covered with dense forests; while its less elevated districts abound with verdant hills and steep valleys full of wild and

interesting scenery, through which innumerable rivulets pour their rapid and transparent waters, and afford the most exquisite fishing.

It is computed that there are over 900 such streams in this department, most of which are the feeders and tributaries of its principal rivers, from whence they, in return, receive abundance of fish.

The principal rivers, in this department, are the *Orne*, *Dives*, *Toucques*, *Ouson*, *Sarthe* and *Huine*.

To fish the *Orne*, the angler should proceed to Argentan; and, after having fished it and its tributaries, he may proceed from thence to Exmes (a distance of nine miles), and fish the upper waters of the Dives; and, from thence, he may proceed to Gacé (a distance of only 4 ½ miles), and fish the *Toucques* and the *Ouson* and their tributaries.

To fish the *Sarthe*, he should proceed to Alençon, which is an excellent fishing station.

To fish the *Huine*, he should proceed to Preaux which commands this noble river and its numerous splendid tributaries.

The Orne is more a grazing than an agricultural country, and seldom produces sufficient corn for its own consumption. It however produces a very considerable quantity of cider, the ordinary beverage

throughout Normandy; and its rich pastures feed a vast number of sheep and cattle.

The extensive forests in this department are said to cover 216,000 acres of land, and its lakes and ponds are very considerable.

Alençon, which is the chief town of this department, is agreeably situated in an extensive and fertile plain surrounded by forests, and at the confluence of the *Sarthe* and the *Briante*. It is a fine town and has a remarkably beautiful promenade, planted with noble trees, which is said to resemble the wood and leading walk in the *Jardin du Luxembourg* at Paris.

Argentan is rather a handsome town: its ramparts command an extensive view bounded by the forest of Argentan.

The village of *Pin-au-Haras*, which is only 3 $^{1}/_{2}$ miles from Argentan, deserves notice for the splendid collection of fine horses which are kept there for the preservation and improvement of the norman breed. The arrangements at the royal stud of Pin, are all upon a magnificent scale, and the managers have a handsome chateau, in the centre of the establishment: its avenues are cut through a dense forest, and are strikingly beautiful.

Britany.

The province of Britany consisted of the departments of the Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Morbihan, Ille-et-Vilaine and Loire-Inférieure, which we shall now examine.

The Côtes-du-Nord.

In this department the principal rivers are the *Rance, Arguenon, Gouessan, Evron, Gouet, Leff* and *Trieux* which afford excellent fishing.

To fish the *Rance,* the angler should proceed to the picturesque town of Dinan which commands this splendid river and its tributaries.

The strong town of Dinan is built on a steep hill, 180 feet above the level of the river, and is surrounded by walls of unusual height and thickness: its boulevards are tastefully planted and laid out in gardens, and command an extensive view of this interesting country.

The beautiful valleys of the *Rance* are full of wild and picturesque scenery, and it abounds with trout and large chub. The Chalybeate-Spa, at Dinan, is much esteemed and numerously attended during the season. Its waters are considered very beneficial in all lym-

phatic cutaneous and urinary diseases, and in any derangement of the digestive organs.

To fish the *Arguenon*, the angler should proceed to Jugon, 13 ½ miles from Dinan; and, after fishing it, and its tributaries above the town, he may descend the stream to Plancoet below which it is navigable.

To fish the *Gouessan*, he should proceed to Lamballe, 11 miles from St-Brieux: it is renowned for its linen-manufactures.

It was at the siege of Lamballe that the famous François de Lanoue, surnamed Bras-de-Fer, was killed, in 1591.

After fishing above the town, the angler may descend the stream to its junction with the *Evron*, which may also be conveniently fished from this town, and is an excellent river.

To fish the *Gouet*, he should proceed to Quintin, 8 miles from St-Brieux. Quintin is built in a beautiful valley on the *Gouet*, near an immense forest of the same name: it possesses an interesting chateau constructed on the ruins of an ancient fortress.

To fish the *Leff*, he should proceed to Chatelaudren, which is a very neat town, surrounded by an interesting country, studded with handsome country-seats; and after fishing this river, he may cross over to

Guimgamp, and fish the *Trieux*, above the town; and, from thence, down the stream to Pontrieux, below which this river is navigable.

Finistère.

In this department the rivers *Jarleau*, *Kerlent*, *Aulne*, *Odet*, *Eir*, *Isole* and *Ellé* afford excellent fishing.

To fish the *Jarleau* and *Kerlent*, the angler should proceed to the beautiful town of Morlaix, which is agreeably situated between two hills, and on the river Morlaix. It is six miles from the sea. Both rivers are fishable at a convenient distance above the town.

To fish the *Aulne*, he should proceed to Château-neuf-du-Faon, and fish it, and its tributaries, all which contain abundance of trout and salmon.

To fish the *Odet* and *Eir*, he should proceed to Quimper, and, ascend these rivers. The cathedral of Quimper is one of the finest in Britany, and deserves a visit.

To fish the *Isole* and *Ellé*, he should proceed to Quimperlé, 30 miles from Quimper, and on the verge of this department, which commands these rivers and their tributary streams, all which are excellent

Morbihan.

In this department the rivers *Scorf*, *Blavet*, *Oust* and *Artz* afford excellent fishing.

To fish the *Scorf*, the angler should proceed to Pont-Scorf, 7 miles from Quimperlé, and ascend the river, which is navigable below the town.

To fish the *Blavet*, he should proceed to Pontivy, from whence he may fish this river and its tributaries, which will be found excellent.

To fish the *Oust*, he should proceed to Josselin (also called Jocelin), which commands this river and its tributaries. There are some tributary streams which flow into the *Oust*, below Josselin, at the village of Montertelot, which are excellent trout streams, and should be visited.

To fish the *Artz*, he should proceed to Vannes, and ascend the river.

At Cornac on the sea coast, seven leagues from Lorient there is one of the most curious celtic monuments in France. It is situated upon a vast heath, and consists of above 1200 enormous rough stones, ranged in eleven parallel lines, running from south-east to north-west, of 1526 mètres in length, and 94 mètres in breadth. At the north-west extremity of

these lines there is a semi-circle formed of similar stones; most of them are placed vertically, and vary from 5 to 20 feet in height. They present a most strange and singular appearance.

Loire-Inférieure.

In this department, the *Loire* and *Vilaine* are not fishable; but some of their tributary streams afford excellent sport.

The *Isac*, *Don* and *Cher* which pour their waters into the *Vilaine* are esteemed excellent rivers, and the *Brive* and *Erdre*, which are tributaries to the noble *Loire*, are well supplied with both salmon and trout. The angler may fish the *Isac* and the *Erdre* from Bout-du-Bois.

To fish the *Don* he should proceed to Issé, which is only 9 miles from Châteaubriant on the *Cher*; and to fish the *Brive*, and its tributaries, he should proceed to St Joachim which commands the best parts of them.

Ille-et-Vilaine.

In this department the rivers *Vilaine*, *Bruc*, *Seiche*, *Couesnon*, *Meu* and *Garun*, and their respective tributaries afford excellent fishing.

To fish the *Vilaine*, the angler should proceed to Vitre, and fish down the stream to Rennes.

To fish the *Bruc*, he should proceed to Thiellay, which commands it and its tributaries.

To fish the *Seiche*, he should proceed to La Guerche; and to fish the *Couesnon*, he should proceed to Fougières; and to fish the *Meu* and *Garun*, he should proceed to Monfort, which towns command the best parts of said several rivers; all of which afford excellent sport.

The small farmers and the peasantry of Britany are kind, generous and hospitable to the utmost extent of their very circumscribed means. Their charity, too, is of a very pure and primitive character. They unhesitatingly invite the wandering mendicant to partake of their frugal meals : he takes his seat at the table, eats, drinks, smokes and converses with all the freedom and familiarity of an honoured guest; and, in return, entertains the company with whatever news he may have collected in his rambles, or with some marvellous story invented for the occasion, the truth of which is never questioned.

They are remarkably superstitious, and have a firm belief in the existence of ghosts, hobgoblins, fairies and such like matters, and unlimited veneration for

blessed wells, and druidical remains, with which the country abounds. They have also much reliance in their interpretation of evil omens. The cry of the owl, the raven or the sea eagle creates great alarm in their minds, and is considered the harbinger of some dreadful calamity.

They often hear Death's carriage (carriguel an ancon), when he is going the rounds at night: and profess to distinguish the cries of persons lost at sea, in the roaring of the waves, who, they say, are calling on their friends and relations to pray for their souls.

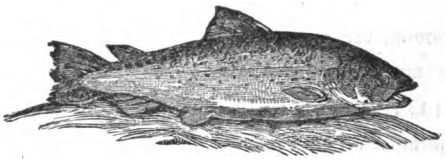
They also have a curious notion that the devil frequents all cross-roads, and they usually erect the cross at such places to drive him from thence.

Doctor Granville has, in his entertaining work on the Spas of Germany, fully explained their extraordinary medical powers, and the nice admixture and chemical combination of their salts and gases, upon which so much depends: but whenever he turns his thoughts towards the miraculous Spas of Britany, he will discover a new and powerful ingredient in the presence of a patron saint, who presides over, and infuses his sanative spirit in their crystal waters, and who never refuses his salutary aid to his faithful

votaries. Fortunately for the reputation of the saint, and the character of these holy and venerated Spas, all failures are attributed to the unworthiness of the patient, and his want of faith.

There is a fountain near the chapel, at Clarté, which restores sight to the blind; at Locminé, S^{t} Colomban cures insanity, and, at Carnac, S^{t} Corneille cures all the diseases of horned cattle; but none of the Spas, in Britany, can be compared to the celebrated irish Spa, at Lucan, which, not only cured the poor woman's sore leg, but, at the same time, darned a hole in her stocking, in the short space of 15 minutes.

The farmers of Britany have a curious notion of precedence in their domestic circles, and are exceedingly punctilious in respect thereto. They usually eat from one dish, which none attempt to touch until the master first helps himself: after him, his male children; and, after them, the farm servants help themselves, and then the females of the family, commencing with the farmer's wife, take their shares. Such is the established order of precedence on all occasions where anything of the sort is visible; in processions of all sorts, etc.



Walton, in his "Complete angler" to which little can be added by modern writers on the subject of fishing, speaks of five species of trout, as known in England; namely:

1° The cray-trout, being a small fish about the size of a gudgeon, found in great abundance in the river *Cray*, in Kent.

2° The skegger-trout, called by some the Par, which never exceeds the size of a herring.

3° The fordidge-trout, a fine large fish distinguished from the salmon by its colour, being white when in proper season. No angler can catch the fordidge-trout, nor can it be ascertained what they feed upon.

4° The bull-trout of Northumberland, which is also found in Scotland in great abundance.

5° The salmon-trout, of which there are many varieties, and perhaps the red trout, so common in Ireland, may be considered as such.

French naturalists only speak of three species of

trout: 1° La truite, the common trout; 2° la truite saumonée, the red or salmon coloured trout; and 3° la truite des Alpes, the alpine-trout, which is a small fish, about the size of a herring, and is found in the most rapid parts of certain mountain streams in Auvergne, Provence and the lower Alps, collected in vast numbers about mill-races and water-falls. They take the fly with great avidity, provided the angler keeps out of sight, if not, they are scared and immediately disappear.

There are numerous varieties of the trout species, distinguishable from each other by their size, colour, spots and general appearance; and each variety has its standard size, which they soon attain, and never exceed: hence some rivers are remarkable for large, and others for small fish; and hence the striking equality in size of most trout taken in any particular stream..... a circumstance which, it appears to me, cannot be otherwise accounted for.

Walton tells us that the trout usually spawns about october, or november; but, in some rivers, a little sooner or later; and the french naturalists say that they spawn at the commencement of the autumn, so that, if anything the french trout are a shade earlier than the english trout, in spawning.

There is a curious story told of a trout, known to have been for several years in St-Patrick's well, at the ancient abbey of Oran, in Ireland. Numberless pilgrims came from the remotest parts of the country to visit and perform stations at St-Patrick's well. They all saw and admired the beautiful trout, in its limpid water. No one could account for its being there, and no one would venture to molest it.

It however so happened that it was once, unintentionally, taken home by a peasant girl in fetching water to boil some potatoes; and, strange to say, escaped notice until it was discovered swimming about in the boiling water, perfectly uninjured, and as active and lively as ever.

I need scarce add that it was immediately restored to its native element, and that, from thenceforth, it became an object of the most enthusiastic adoration.

Some years afterwards, two unhappy pilgrims came to perform their stations at the venerated abbey of Oran, and were proceeding round the holy well, on their bare-knees, confessing aloud, and calling on the patron saint to intercede for the remission of their sins; one had cruelly assassinated an avaricious landlord; the other was the foster brother of the murdered victim: he, unfortunately, overheard the

appalling confession; and, inflamed by the sudden and unexpected discovery of the assassin, seized a huge stone that accidentally lay within his reach, and dashed out the murderer's brains. Whereupon the much venerated trout, assuming the form of a hideous dragon, sprang from the well, devoured both pilgrims, and disappeared.

The neighbouring peasantry are firmly persuaded that the trout, though now invisible, still remains in the holy well, and expect that it will re-appear on some extraordinary occasion; perhaps on the regeneration of Ireland.

Directions how to bait with a Minnow.

(Omitted at page 231*).*

If you employ the tackle described in page 231, proceed thus: choose a smallish white-bellied minnow; first press the lead delicately into its stomach, and fasten the single hook in its lips (introducing it underneath, and passing it out through the upper lip); then pass the tackle over its back, fastening one of the upper pair of hooks, neatly and firmly in its thickest part; and then draw down the remaining

pair of hooks, diagonally, across the side of the fish, fastening one of them mid-way, between the fundament and the tail-fin, and cut off about half of the tail-fin.

If you employ a single hook, proceed thus: pass a threaded darning needle into the mouth, along the side, just under the skin, and out at the fork of the tail of the minnow; then attach the end of the thread to the hook, introduce it into the mouth of the minnow, and draw it down, under its skin, keeping the point towards its back, in which it must be firmly fastened about the middle of the fish: thus the hook is *wholly concealed* in the bait, which lies quite naturally in the stream, and the most cautious trout will take it. Some lead will be necessary on the gut to sink the bait, and the trout must get time to gorge it, when he will be found firmly hooked.

PIKE AND PERCH.

CHAPTER III.

LE BROCHET : THE PIKE.

LA PERCHE : THE PERCH.

The french pike-fishers, being in general persons who supply the markets with fish, naturally prefer trimmers and night lines, and drum-nets, to more sportsmanlike, but less productive methods of killing them. Hence it is that trolling for pike is scarcely known in France. They bait their trimmers and night lines with small roach, which are so abundant in all the french waters, that they find no difficulty in obtaining them in any quantity required, and thus catch abun-

dance of pike and eels with which the markets are always plentifully supplied.

Such being the french system of pike fishing, the british troller must provide himself with pike tackle before he quits England, as nothing of the sort, worth having, can be obtained in France.

The best and simplest tackle he can employ is that in common use in the first pike districts in England, which consists of a double hook mounted on about three inches of twisted wire, neatly leaded, and attached to a small piece of gimp, about a foot in length. It is advisable not to have above three inches of twisted wire, as the whole should lie within the bait, and not reach the narrow part, or tail end of the fish which it soon spoils, and they generally put three times too much wire on the pike hooks sold in the fishing tackle-shops in London.

A long line is also indispensable; from 70 to 90 yards will not be found too much; and it should be sufficiently strong to hold a fish of from 10 to 15 pounds weight, and to stand the drag of weeds and such matters.

All pike-trollers know that when a pike takes the bait, he swims off with it to his favourite feeding place, where he first plays with, and afterwards gorges it.

To enable him to do so, he must be allowed sufficient line; for, if he receives the slightest check, he discovers the line, and casts away the bait.

I have had upwards of 70 yards of line taken from me by a pike not 9 pounds weight on his first dashing off with the bait, and had he reached the end of my line (nearly 100 yards), I should have thrown my rod in after him, or lost all my tackle, as no line could hold him at the rate he was going. I allowed him 15 minutes to gorge, and landed him in something over half an hour.

The best bait that can be employed for pike is a red finned roach of about 4 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches in length. Some fishermen prefer larger bait, and think the pike is apt to feel the lead in small fish: but, in my opinion, a roach of the above dimensions, is sufficiently large to prevent his doing so, and attractive enough, if the water is in proper condition; besides, it is much easier gorged, which is a considerable advantage when pike are not much on the feed, or do not run very large.

The english troller who has acquired a dashing method of flinging his bait to a considerable distance, and then drawing it home through a vast extent of water, must adopt a much quieter system, if he

means to kill pike in this country. The best mode of trolling the canals (where the fish uniformly lie along the banks), is, after dropping in the bait, with as little splash as possible, within a couple of feet of the brink, and allowing it to sink to the bottom, or nearly so, to raise it with a slight jerk in rather a sloping direction (which cannot be done too quickly), until it is sufficiently high in the water, to be visible to the troller, and then to allow it to sink again in the same manner, advancing about a yard at a time.

It is observable that pike uniformly seize the bait in its progress downwards, and never in its ascent, perhaps because its motion is then so perfectly natural.

In thus proceeding along the bank, the troller will not fail to send his glittering bait under all projecting weeds, and into those nooks and corners where pike are known to lie watching, and ready to spring upon their prey, and he cannot exert too much dexterity in keeping himself out of sight of the fish, as they are less apt to gorge the bait if they see the troller.

In fishing the *marais* ponds it is also advisable, first to try near the banks, and under, and about adjoining weeds before the bait is sent gliding into more remote parts; and never to throw it in with

a splash which, in these stagnant waters, has a most injurious effect.

Perch fishing often affords excellent sport; but as the perch, though a bold and voracious fish, will seldom touch dead bait, a different mode of proceeding becomes necessary. The best tackle for this purpose consists of a good strong hook (I prefer n° 6), lashed on a piece of fine gimp, about 12 inches in length, with a large grain of shot upon it, four inches above the hook.

The best bait that can be employed for perch is a small gudgeon, or a minnow. The gudgeon, being a stronger fish than the minnow, will bear more dragging and tossing about, and is, therefore, preferable. In baiting with a gudgeon, or minnow, pass the hook just under the back-fin, deep enough to take a firm hold of the fish; or pass it through its upper lip, either way will answer. When thus fixed upon the hook it swims about with much ease, and will continue to do so for some hours. It should be allowed to swim rather deeper than mid-water, and kept clear of weeds, for which purpose a tolerably large float will be found necessary.

When a perch takes the bait, he swims off with it, but seldom goes far, and should be allowed six or

eight minutes to gorge it: but a pike should be allowed ten minutes at least, after he settles to enjoy his repast.

Those who fish with snap-hooks, of course strike as soon as the bait is taken.

A moderate sized perch, when well hooked in the lip, always dies game, makes powerful resistance to the last, and affords excellent sport.

Many persons fish for perch with lob-worms, brandlings, small frogs, and fresh water shrimps which are all good baits for the purpose, and they also take gentles very freely; but the large fish are more likely to take the gudgeon, or the minnow, and most anglers prefer them.

LOCAL INFORMATION.

There is excellent pike and perch fishing in the neighbourhood of Calais, in the St-Omer canal, and in the *marais* ponds about Guines. To fish the St-Omer canal from Calais, the troller should proceed to Pont-sans-pareil, and fish home to its junction

with the Guines canal, which is the best part of the water, and contains some very fine fish. I had some excellent fishing there in the autumn of 1844 with captain Guillaume of the 55th regt of the line, then quartered at Calais, who is an expert fisherman and makes all his own tackle and rods.

The St-Omer canal, on the Calais side of Watten, which is 6 1/4 miles from St-Omer, is well supplied with pike and perch; but strange to say, M. Dacre, who rents this part of the canal for fishing purposes, though he employs trimmers, night lines, and nets, can neither troll for pike, nor authorize any body else to do so, while at the Calais extremity of the same canal, any body may troll who pleases, without hinderence or interruption.

I once obtained permission to fish in Mr Dacre's waters, *at my own peril,* and had excellent sport: but not feeling quite comfortable in fishing under the constant apprehension of being interrupted, and having some good *marais* ponds for pike fishing, I only went there twice.

There is good pike and perch fishing at Etaple.

Pike and perch are also found in great abundance in all the *marais* lakes and ponds throughout France, and in such canals as have any connection with these

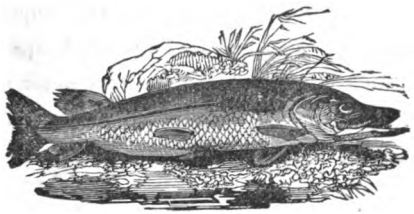
localities. Most of the stagnant waters about the ramparts of fortified towns are well stocked with fish: but both the canals and these waters belong to the state, and are rented by persons who supply the markets with pike, perch, carp, roach and eels, which are freely purchased on those never ending days of abstinence enjoined by the roman catholic church, and so faithfully observed by her zealous votaries.

Excellent pike and perch fishing may be obtained on very reasonable terms in ponds and lakes belonging to private individuals who have properties in these *marais* districts, which have been already described in treating of duck-shooting (page 207), for which purpose it is usual to rent them. When thus rented, the tenant enjoys the exclusive right of fishing, and may, of course, adopt any method he pleases.

Those who wish to obtain *marais* fishing at S^{t}-Omer, should apply to M^{r} Flandrin,* the *garde de l'eau* of these localities, who is well stored with information respecting them. His boat, very conveniently fitted up for such excursions, may be hired on reasonable

* M^{r} Flandrin, 39, Haut-Pont.

terms; he conducts it himself, and will be found a very useful and accommodating person.



The pike is the most voracious of all fresh water fish, and might, with much propriety, be named *the fresh water shark.*

In France they seldom exceed 30 pounds weight: they feed on fish, frogs, water-rats, water-fowl, and, in short, upon anything they can lay hold of, and will occasionally eat one another.

It is curious to see a water-rat (and they are very numerous in the *marais* ponds), swimming across a pond with a long bull-rush in its mouth to protect itself from the pike, which, it appears, affords it effectual protection.

Pike generally quit the ponds in the months of february, march and april, and get into small drains and shallow water for the purpose of spawning. The

young pike spawn first, the old ones somewhat later, and they are not in proper season until september, when the trolling season commences.

The perch is also a fish of prey, and a very bold biter.

They feed on small fish, frogs and worms. I have known them take a grass-hopper, and a natural fly. They are slow growers, and do not breed until their third year; but they soon make ample amends for lost time, and increase very rapidly.

A moderate sized perch was found to contain no less than 997,000 eggs in its roe. But we are told that a cod-fish sold at Workington market, in Cumberland, for one shilling, which weighed 15 pounds, had a roe that weighed two pounds ten ounces, and contained 3,901,440 eggs! Now, supposing each to arrive at the perfection of the mother-fish, its produce would weigh 26,123 tons, and consequently would

load 261 sail of ships, each of 100 tons burthen ; and if each sold for a shilling, they would produce a clear sum of 195,000 pounds sterling.*

You may perhaps never have heard of a *battue aux brochets;* but we nevertheless had one of a very singular character a couple of years since, not far from the town of St-Omer, at Mr Delehaye's lakes, which are celebrated for large pike.

These lakes are surrounded by an extensive tract of low marshy ground; and in 1844 the flood was so great, that they extended over its entire surface, during which period, the pike quit their usual haunts, and scattered over the flooded ground. When the water began to subside, the more elevated parts were first uncovered, and numerous detached flashes were formed, and all connection between them and the lakes cut off. Hundreds of fine fish remained in these flashes, and, as they gradually subsided and became shallower every day, they soon left but little water for the immense quantity of fish they contained.

A gentleman, who was snipe shooting in this low sedgy ground, accidentally discovered the circums-

* *Daniel's rural sports*, vol. 2, p. 34.

tance; the alarm was no sooner given than *la jeune France* was in arms: guns, swords, pitch-forks, spades, boat-poles, cricket-bats and every thing they could lay their unscrupulous hands upon, were in immediate requisition. The slaughter was immense, and the scene ludicrous in the extreme; suffice it to say that some cart-loads of pike, bream, perch and roach were killed in these shallow waters, and borne off in triumph and exultation by the men, women and children, who all assisted in the indiscriminate massacre.

BLEAK, GUDGEON AND ROACH.

CHAPTER IV.

L'ABLETTE : THE BLEAK.
LE GARDON : THE ROACH.
LE GOUJON : THE GUDGEON.

We shall now enter upon the fascinating amusement of bleak-fishing, for which the angler must make some special preparations.

His rod cannot be too light, or his tackle too fine for this sport. He should be provided with the very finest blue gut bottoms, and with hooks mounted upon the most delicate gut

or hair. N° 10 is the proper hook, both for bleak and gudgeon-fishing; and nothing can exceed the fineness of the tackle furnished by M' Chevalier for this purpose.

The best bait for bleak is the natural house-fly, lightly thrown upon the surface of the water, and not allowed to sink much below it: but gentles, after being kept a few days in bran, when they become clean and white, and lose the very offensive smell they always have when fresh, will be found an efficient bait for bleak. They also take an artificial fly, but never freely: the black gnat, or a small black or red palmer, will answer best for the experiment, if it must be made. But the experienced angler, who knows the appropriate bait for each sort of fish, and when, and how to employ it, will not be easily persuaded to depart from the established principles of his craft, or to substitute one for another, from any whimsical preference of his own. He will, on the contrary, laugh at the affectation and empty baskets of those who do, and will always employ each in its proper place.

The angler who whips for bleak with gentles, should cast them as far from him as he conveniently can, and let them fall as lightly as possible on the

water, and then draw them slowly through it, allowing them to sink a few inches below the surface, and he must keep himself out of sight of the fish, as they are remarkably quick sighted, and very easily scared: If thus dealt with, they take the gentles with the utmost avidity, and afford excellent sport: But if the angler employs a small quill float to prevent the gentles sinking too deep in the water, he may then leave them stationary for a few moments, until the bleak, which are continually passing, up and down, come to them, when they at once snap them up. Whenever a bleak takes a gentle, he swims away with it, and then a slight motion of the wrist fastens the hook in his delicate lip; he proceeds as if quite unconscious of being a prisoner; and, if allowed to do so for a moment, a second generally takes the remaining gentle, and a similar twitch secures him also. The angler then shortens his line, and lands his glittering prize.

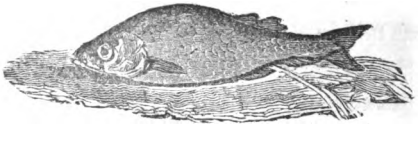
When they are just taken out of the water, and appear with their extended fins, dancing, in silvery brightness, on the slender tackle, no fish can be more exquisitely beautiful.

The bleak, however, is not merely a beautiful, it is also an eminently useful fish. Its scales afford a

brilliant substance named *essence orientale*, employed in the fabrication of pearls, which the very best judges can scarcely distinguish from the genuine article, in water or brilliancy; so that this exquisitely beautiful fish, not only contributes to our amusement, and affords us a delicious morsel when served, hot and crisp, at the breakfast table, but rivals the productions of eastern climates, in decorating the loveliest of earthly beings. What fish can we compare to the merry bleak?

Bleak are found in the greatest abundance in all the canals, lakes and ponds throughout France; but always take best where there is a strong current.

In the vicinity of St-Omer, there is a small branch of the river *Aa*, which flows through the extensive *commune* of Arques, which abounds with bleak, roach, dace and gudgeon, where the angler may fill his *panier* in a few hours, and will always have excellent sport.



There are enormous roach-carp in the *fossés* about

the ramparts of St-Omer, which may be taken in the autumn with a large moth, or a grasshopper, dropped upon the water, and kept on the surface as if drowning

It is curious to see them swimming round it, with such caution and circumspection, before they resolve upon taking it; and then making such a plunge at it, that one might suppose a Newfoundland dog had leaped into the water.

I have killed some of them over 2 pounds weight; but it is necessary to have a rod of considerable length, in order to drop the grasshopper over the reeds, and bull rushes, in such vacant spaces as may be found free from weeds.

Mr Chevalier furnished me with one 22 feet long, and of convenient weight for this fishing, which answers the purpose exceedingly well.

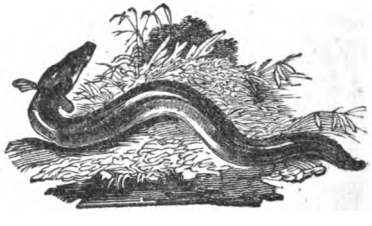
We must not forget the gudgeon-fishing which is very superior in the vicinity of St-Omer, in the small branch of the *Aa* (already mentioned), that flows through the *commune* of Arques, and loses its identity in the labyrinthian waters of Clairmarais. It is a very rapid stream, and requires the adoption of very peculiar tackle. The bests consists of a bullet at the extremity of a strong gut bottom; to which two or

three small hooks may be attached, each on about six inches of gut. The bullet retains the bait in the rapid part of the stream, where the fish are usually collected, and lie in shoals on the gravelly bottom.

The proper bait is a small red worm; and, if too large, a bit of the tail end, may be nipped off.

In this stream the angler may fill his basket with the finest gudgeon.

An experienced angler has assured me that they are much larger than any he ever saw in England.



An Eel-Hunt.

Two juvenile anglers were one morning at Mr Delehaye's celebrated lakes (to use Master Frankie's hyperbolical language) *tearing out big fish*, when an ill-timed thunder-storm terminated their amusement; but not before Master Frankie caught an enormous eel, nearly as long as himself.

When they reached the town of St-Omer the rain was falling thickly and heavily, and the water was rushing down the polished pavements of its narrow streets in rapid torrents.

Having arrived at one, which was nearly impassable, Boz clambered over, and Frankie slung his *panier* after him with considerable adroitness. He then commenced cautiously balancing and swinging his own to and fro (pendulum-like), to gain sufficient impetus for the safe transit of its precious contents: but, alas! when just parting with his boasted prize, his foot slipped, and all tumbled into the rapid stream, and away went the *panier, en route* for the troubled waters of the Aa.

The eel, roused from its torpor, put out its head... What a moment for poor Frankie, whose heart and soul were in his enormous eel! It was more than he could endure.... He plunged in on one side; Boz plunged in on the other, and the eel slipped quietly out of the *panier* into its native element.

A numerons school was just passing: boys will be boys,... All joined in the chase; and, although they overtook, and frequently got hold of the eel, in shallow places, it always slipped through their hands; and, after many a narrow escape, dropped with a

heavy splash into the rapid waters of the Aa, and was soon borne back to its old haunts where, no doubt, it gave a curious account of its short, but eventful, visit to St-Omer.—Au revoir.

APPENDIX

A SKETCH OF THE GAME LAWS OF FRANCE,

Promulgated 3d *may* 1844.

It is provided by the game laws of France, that the Prefets of the several departments shall determine, by formal decrees, duly promulgated, at least 10 days before the time, the precise day on which the *chasse* shall be opened, and the day on which it shall be closed; and both hunting and shooting are strictly prohibited; *save, while the chasse is opened.*

It is also provided that the Prefets shall, upon the application of the Mayor of the *commune*, in which the applicant resides, grant a *permis de chasse* (except to certain disqualified persons), for which 15 francs are payable to the state, and 10 francs to the *commune;* and that such *permis de chasse* shall confer the personal privilege of *hunting and shooting* throughout the entire kingdom of France, for the term of one whole year, to be computed from the day of its date. ARTICLES 1, 3 AND 5.

It is further provided that it shall not be lawful to hunt, or shoot, on the property of another without his consent.

ARTICLE 1.

It is also provided that the Prefets shall determine: 1o The proper time for shooting birds of passage (except quails), and water-fowl; 2o The time during which water-fowl may be shot in the *marais* districts, and upon ponds

and rivers; and 3o The noxious animals that the proprietors and farmers may destroy at all seasons on their lands.

It is also provided that the Prefets shall make proper regulations : 1o To prevent the destruction of birds ; 2o To authorise the use of greyhounds in the destruction of noxious animals; and 3o To prevent hunting and shooting while the ground is covered with snow. ARTICLE 9.

Persons guilty of offences against these laws are punishable by fine and imprisonment, and the confiscation of the gun, nets, engines and other implements employed, according to the circumstances of the case. ARTICLES 11, 12, 13 AND 16.

Rewards are given for convictions, which are paid out of the fines imposed, and the remainder, goes to the *commune* where the offence was committed; and it is expressely provided that no extenuating circumstances shall be taken into consideration, but that the law shall be rigorously enforced.

ARTICLES 19 AND 20.

It is further provided, for the preservation of game, that it shall be unlawful to buy, sell or possess game whilst the *chasse* is closed, or to take or destroy the eggs or young of pheasants, partridges or quails; and persons guilty of offences, under this article, are punished by fine and imprisonment.

ARTICLE 4.

PISCATORY LAWS.

15 *avril* 1829.

By these laws, the right of fishing is reserved for the benefit of the state; 1o in all rivers, canals and public

waters which are navigable or floatable with boats or rafts; and which are maintained at the expense of the government; 2o In all waters connected with such rivers, canals, etc., which are in like manner maintained at the expense of the government. TITLE 1, ARTICLE 1.

And the exclusive right of fishing in these canals, rivers and waters (subject to the following reservation) is enjoyed by persons who rent them from the state, for fishing purposes, and supply the markets with fresh water fish.

Nevertheless all persons are authorised to fish à la ligne flottante *(with a floating line) in all the rivers, canals and waters belonging to the state, except during the spawning season.* TITLE 1, ARTICLE 5.

It is under this express reservation in favour of angling *à la ligne flottante*, that the british angler is entitled to fish in these waters, without the consent of the persons who rent them from the state.

Fishing *à la ligne flottante* means fishing without a sink attached to the tackle, and thus in strictness float fishing (with lead or shot attached to the line) is not warranted by the foregoing reservation, though it is the mode uniformly adopted by the french anglers, and may, therefore, be considered within the scope of the reservation for all practical purposes.

In all other rivers and canals, the proprietors of the adjoining lands have the right of fishing on their respective sides, to the middle of the water. TITLE 1, ARTICLE 2.

Persons fishing without permission are punishable by fine of from 20 to 100 francs, and the forfeiture of their rods, nets, etc.; besides being responsible for any special damage done.

It is right to observe that few proprietors perserve their fish, and that the fishing in trout rivers, etc., is sufficiently opened for all sporting purposes : but whenever the angler finds the words *pêche réservée* posted up, he should respect them, and go elsewhere.

There are numerous provisions for the preservation of fish during the spawning season, and to prevent the use of destructive nets, and the killing of fish under certain specified sizes; but the angler has nothing to do with these restrictions, and is always glad to see them rigorously enforced. They, therefore, need not be noticed.

A TABLE

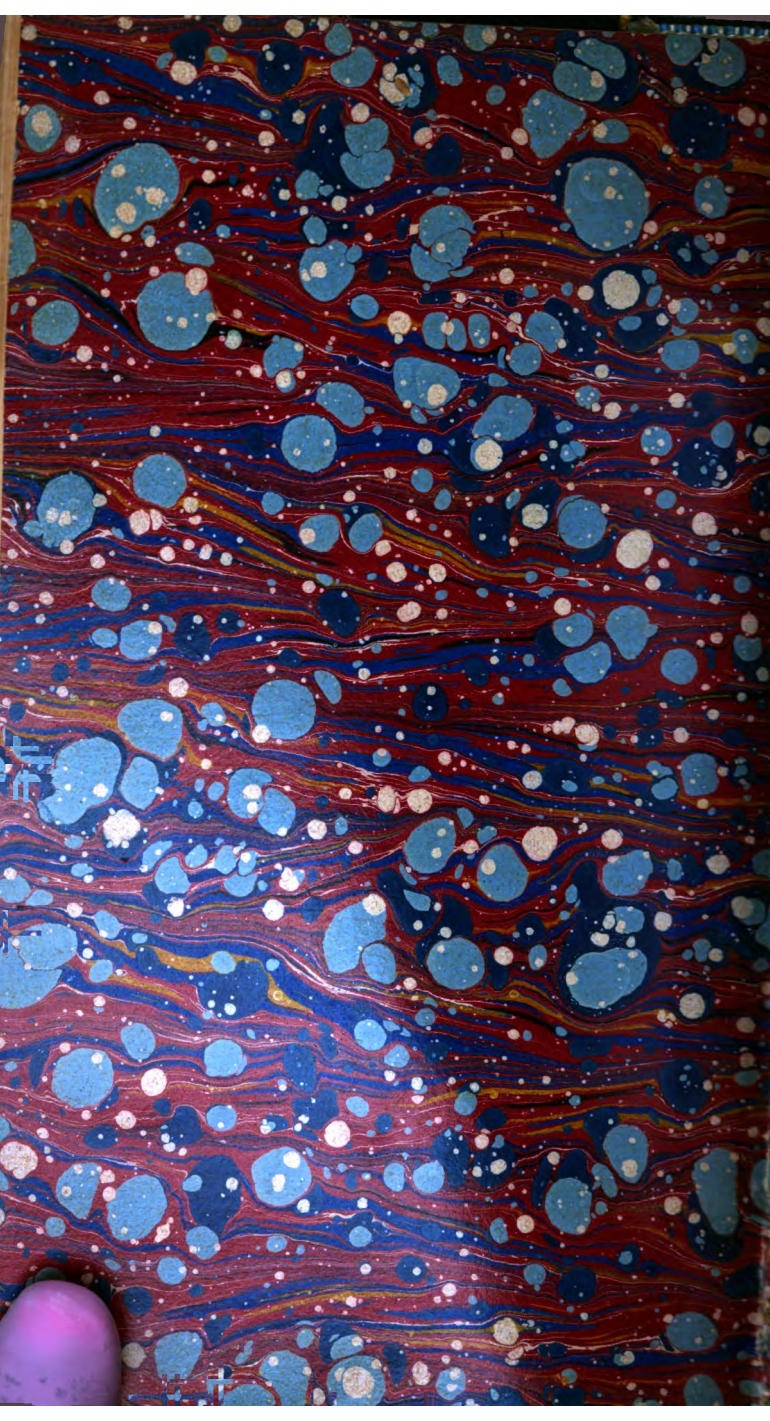
of kilomètres reduced to english miles, quarters of miles and yards, for the convenience of tourists in France.

An english mile contains 1760 yards.

Kilomètres.	English miles.	Yards.	Kilomètres.	English miles.	Yards.
1	1/2 and	212	13	8 and	123
2	1 —	425	14	8 1/2 —	336
3	1 3/4 —	197	15	9 1/4 —	108
4	2 1/4 —	440	16	9 3/4 —	321
5	3 —	180	17	10 1/2 —	93
6	3 1/2 —	395	18	11 —	300
7	4 1/4 —	168	19	11 3/4 —	79
8	4 3/4 —	380	20	12 1/4 —	291
9	5 1/2 —	153	30	18 1/2 —	217
10	6 —	425	40	24 3/4 —	143
11	6 3/4 —	156	50	31 —	69
12	7 1/4 —	351	100	62 —	138

The reader will make due allowance for any misprints he may discover, when apprised that the printer knows nothing of the english language, and they chiefly occur in the commencement of the work.

ERRATA.

PAGE.	LINE.				
2	20	for	minutiœ,	read	minutiæ.
17	2	—	accasionally	—	occasionally.
20	3	—	beats	—	beasts.
27	1	—	flacks	—	flasks.
30	10	—	desinterested	—	disinterested.
—	22	—	turbulant	—	turbulent.
35	12	—	stiring	—	stirring.
—	in note	—	1829	—	1839.
38	6	—	odered	—	ordered.
39	20	—	devide	—	divide.
60	9	—	eludc	—	elude.
68	24	—	spring	—	autumn.
69	12	—	higly	—	highly.
87	13	—	fly	—	flag.
165	13	—	plenty	—	abundant.

NOTE.—The frontispiece was so ill-executed, that it was necessarily suppressed.